

An outline map of India, showing the country's borders and major geographical features like the Arabian Sea to the west, the Bay of Bengal to the east, and the Indian Ocean to the south. The map is centered on the page.

MY SPIRITUAL INDIA

By

**The Reverend Yogacharya
David R. Hickenbottom**

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INTRODUCTION

My Spiritual India is an intimate diary of my outer and inner journey to India from September 21, 1998 to March 3, of 1999. I have followed a spiritual discipline from the time I first met my Guru, Yogacharya Mother Hamilton in 1974. From her and books I read, I had heard stories of the Spiritual Masters of India and of my Guru's own experiences while there. Once I asked her, "Mother, I have been thinking about traveling to India?" She smiled sweetly at me and said, "When your Guru is right here?" Well of course, I did not want or need to go anywhere for my spiritual adventure, it being right where I was. All interest left me for such an adventure. Since January 31, 1991, when Mother left her body in mahasamadhi, my life was full. I was living my sadhana¹, my path to God, and teaching the Kriya Yoga tradition and balanced spiritual living as she had taught me, right where I was! It was the year proceeding my departure for India that an inner direction came to me very powerfully to go. Why go? It was all due to an inner prompting.

To go on a pilgrimage, I felt, was not to go with the idea of what I was to receive, but, in gratitude for what I had already been given. My own Guru was the disciple of Paramhansa Yogananda, one of the greatest spiritual Masters of this, or any, century. Mother often had the feeling that Master, as Yogananda, was lovingly referred to by his disciples, was so great that he could have been Christ come again. Paramhansa Yogananda had come to America in 1920 to live and teach the liberating message of Yoga. The practice of Yoga leads the aspirant to conscious union with God, that all beneficent, all loving, all powerful Presence and sole creator of all that is. In India it is said, "God is one, but has many names," and may be known by Its qualities. God-experience is the sum and substance of this path that came to me from these great Masters. It is for these teachings that I feel such great gratitude. These spiritual Masters not only paid the price for their own realization, but also made it possible for all who have sincere interest to have the means to gain this great state of God-experience.

My gratitude extends not only to my Guru and Param-Guru (my Guru's Guru), but to those who made it possible for Master to be successful in America. For Yogananda was the recipient of the wisdom and training of his own Guru, Sri Yukteswar, and the love and blessings of so many of the great saints of India of his time. A Guru is one who comes as the teacher of the methods by which one can achieve the goal of God realization. They are also the living example of those teachings, in that they have achieved that realization themselves. They also serve as a living link between that highest Consciousness of God and the sadhaka, the aspirant. That is, through association with a true Guru, an aspirant's consciousness is quickened to enable them to have some experience in that supreme state of awareness. Gratitude comes easily and naturally to me in going to India for all I had received from my Guru. A generous line of teachers from Babaji to Lahiri Mahasaya, to Swami Sri Yukteswar, to Paramhansa Yogananda and to Mother comes to me, and all who follow this path, even as the Ganges comes down from the headwaters of the Himalayas. It has been said that Babaji, along with Jesus, is working out the means of salvation for our times. May their millennial plans come to fruition.

In going on this pilgrimage to India, my gratitude not only extended to my line of Gurus, but to the many saints of India of whose lives I had read about and who have helped inspire me in my own sadhana, my spiritual discipline and path to God-Realization. Not the least of these was Swami Ramdas. This great

God-man had traveled to America in 1954. After Yogananda's passing from the body in 1952, circumstances occurred in such a way that Mother felt she needed the help of a living Master to go through those experiences she would come to speak of as the mystical crucifixion. After meeting Papa, as Swami Ramdas was lovingly known, she felt a powerful inward direction from God to answer his invitation that she and her husband, Ralph, come to see him in India. They sold their home and all they had to make this highly unusual trip, especially for those times, to Anandashram² in the south of India.

I too found myself in the position of feeling the inward direction to go to India, and in particular, to see Swami Satchidananda, Swami Ramdas' successor as head Swami at Anandashram. It was at this ashram in 1958 that Mother went through some terrifically difficult experiences that propelled her toward her full God-Realization. In truth, becoming established in full God-realization was my goal as well. I felt that having the darshan³, the sight and blessings, of Swami Satchidananda and other saints and sacred places of India would help in achieving my goal of complete God-Realization.

In my own search for God, I have undergone tremendous experiences that have helped uplift me from the human state of consciousness toward the Divine. However, this transformation had not yet completed itself. It is said by some that only twelve completely God-realized Masters are on this earth at any particular time. Whatever the truth, it can be said that fully, or completely, realized Masters are rare. I had it in mind to have nothing less than this complete realization and have come to India by inner direction for the purpose of achieving it. We are told this realization is our inheritance and that if we desire it beyond all other things then we will have it. The thing is this: desire nature does not die easily and as long as any residue of worldly attachment resides in the conscious or subconscious mind, it will continue to be an obstacle to the realization of our universal Self.

In the 1980's Mother had given me permission to teach and to give Kriya initiation. She told me when Master had asked her to do the same she had not yet realized God fully. It was by serving other souls in this way that helped her in attaining her full realization. By an inner and outer commission I have served other souls by teaching the methods of living a spiritual life as my Guru had taught me, and by practicing my sadhana. When Mother asked me to teach, she said, "teach by using your own experience." This did not come naturally to me, as I am a private person by nature. Not only that, but the nature of spiritual experiences represents the most sacred and intimate part of me. Up until the time when I began to teach, I had not discussed my inner experiences with anyone outside of my Guru. Talking of my inmost experiences to other aspirants was an act of total surrender to my Guru.

What follows are my writings that speak to these experiences during my pilgrimage to India. It is a record of my struggles and times of up-liftment. This is a discussion with myself that is frank and self-revelatory in nature. I do this in humble submission to my Guru as part of my ministry, service, to other seekers. I find most of us feel alone in our struggle in gaining self-mastery of our desire nature of fear, anger, lust, greed or any of their "family" of kindred spirits of darkened consciousness. However, humanity not only shares a lower human nature, but a Divine one as well. Both are a part of the narrative and I have let it stand as it is. My greatest desire is that you, the reader, gain value and edification in your own path to God and find inspiration to fulfill your own quest for realizing Who and What you truly are: Divine God-Beings; nay, God Itself.

Reverend Yogacharya David R. Hickenbottom
December 3, 1999

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MY SPIRITUAL INDIA



September 21 - December 4, 1998

September 21, 1998

Pacific Ocean: The Start

Flying 30,000 feet above the Pacific, Phyllis⁴ and I are headed to India, land of my “spiritual fathers.” The weeks leading up to this day have been difficult. I have had the feeling of a lead blanket on my heart, an unknown source of pressure from above and behind the center of my chest, as well as the solar plexus feeling a fluttering sensation. I have also had intense kundalini heat and pain in the spine and head. This, combined with daily withdrawal of the life force from voluntary motion of the body, have made it difficult to operate in the world, much less to prepare for a trip of this magnitude! However, stronger than these difficulties has been my faith that Divine Consciousness is in strict charge of this trip and my life and therefore I am looked after perfectly. Even when the pressure in the solar plexus feels a bit like the wind getting punched out of me, and my life force with it, I know that it is God that moves through me for my highest good.

I find that I cannot anticipate anything of this trip. I am as a small child led step by step. I had hoped to be more organized in preparing to go. Due to these inner experiences I found it impossible to manage my own affairs. Fortunately God has seen to it to send help through many hands. A year before my leaving, I was talking to Peter Shultz about the trip to India. He stood with hands in his pockets and suddenly produced a crisp ten rupee note. Handing it to me he said, “Here, this is for your trip.” As I took the note in some surprise, I had never seen such a note before, he continued, “I have never been to India before, and I have never seen Indian money before. In fact, I have no idea where that note I just gave you came from!” I felt this “miracle money” was sweet assurance by the great Provider that all would be provided. In fact, Peter and Laura gave a generous gift on the eve of my going. Phyllis Victory had paid for my plane ticket, and my parents sent money for a video camera. Carla Gold has helped by taking care of my business affairs while I am gone, and Pam Banks assisted in my preparations to go. Larry and Cate Koler, Al and Elaine Cone and so many sincere and dedicated souls all have made this trip possible through contributions and heartfelt good wishes. My heart fills with gratitude at all that God has done to work His will through so many. I feel God and the Masters’ will being worked in my life. I am a grateful lump of clay being molded in their hands.

God has thrilled me with ever new joy and bliss. I feel as if I am cocooned in His hands. Once again, perhaps continuously, God fills me with gratitude.

Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Sri Sri Ram!

Sept. 21 Richard Wright

On the way to Vancouver last night, God showed me something very interesting. When Richard Wright went to India with Master, and later left Master's work to get married, Master, in-as-much, cut Richard off! Why? God inwardly revealed to me the reason, at a time I had not been thinking of this situation at all. By Richard being in close working relationship with Master, he was in a crucible that was molding his human nature to a Divine one. The pressure and strain of this crucible was helping Richard toward his God-Realization at an accelerated rate. Leaving the crucible of the work was, for Richard, bound to retard his progress. To punctuate this in Richard's consciousness, Master cut him off. This action was, ultimately, for Richard's highest good. This spontaneous intuition explained something to me that I had felt troubled by before. One of God's inscrutable ways of showing me inner Truths.

Sept. 24 Delhi

Arrived from Singapore last night. Neelu, (tour guide for Bill Marions group) met us at the airport with transportation, thanks to Bill's connection and whose tour group we flew with from Vancouver. We drove to the YWCA as it poured rain, traffic was very heavy, our driver proved to be skillful. I soon learned a honk on the horn means "move over" to the vehicle in front, or "I'm coming by you". Horns are always honking; not angry, but informative. Lights and windshield wipers are used sparingly, often times being turned off despite it being night time and pouring rain. The "Y" did not have our reservations recorded and they were full. Just before midnight all were able to get rooms but me. I was asked to wait ten minutes and at midnight they released a reserved room. I am taken care of in such wonderful ways.

Infinite Master, you take away with one hand and give with another! Who can gainsay
Your ways?
O Lord, You have such a wonderful play.

Breakfast came with the room, \$15.00/night. The room has a large ceiling fan, no air conditioning was really needed, slept well. Air is warm and humid. Fortunately the rain had broken the extreme heat of the week before.

O Ram⁵, how sweetly you look after your tender-footed children.

Went to train station to activate Indrail tickets. "Touts" are there to cheat the unwary traveler by directing them across the street to their storefront where they sell bogus tickets. They are quite insistent, but we were warned by the "Lonely Planet" book. Then we went to lunch at the Imperial Hotel, had some of the best dahl ever. Back out to airport to retrieve Phyllis' luggage forgotten the night before. My mind has been functioning well. That's good because Phyllis' mind has been a little absent. Had vegetarian plate here at the "Y" for dinner. Plenty of good food for less than a \$1.00 American! Will leave for Haridwar in the early A.M.

I have not yet got a fix on any spiritual feeling here in India. God is present, I see Him in all, but that is my normal state these days. That comes in the strength of my own realization. I have also wanted to experience the power and beauty of spiritual India, coming from the people and places of this sacred land of yogis. Others have described feeling a spiritual vibration when disembarking from the plane. Yet, for me, no discernable spiritual feeling. People here do not smile, and of course there is the poverty. Yet there is a gentleness about the Indians, even the more aggressive panhandlers. Buildings in decay: pity! Have seen some sterling souls, Neelu, Vini, who have helped with travel arrangements here at the "Y" and the woman

helping with the lost luggage at Singapore Airlines. None, however have been overtly spiritual. It seems I am keen to encounter spiritual India as soon as possible. I have had to go inside consciously at times not to get overwhelmed by sensory stimuli. Well, tomorrow, to holy Haridwar.

Lord, I am sure You will reveal to me why You have brought me here. Of course, You are my Supreme Tour Director.

Sept. 25 Delhi

5:00A.M. – sitting on verandah–giant palm in front–crickets and morning birds singing their psalm of praise–gently drifting through the air–coming from nowhere and everywhere–men’s chanting from a nearby Sikh Temple. Longing prayers–the sound of the universal heart. Is this answer to my plea of last night? Here, in predawn quiet is a piece of devotional India.

O Lord, how sweet this moment–before the horns and traffic there beats a quieter movement.

Sept. 25 -cont-

– sitting by the Ganges in Haridwar. Train trip from Delhi was all I had ever pictured. After boarding the train we had breakfast: tea, spicy vegetables fried in batter, white bread, butter and jam, then juice afterwards. Train gently swayed, scenery changed from brick buildings in various states of disrepair to sugar cane and rice paddy fields. As we journeyed further from Delhi people started to smile, laugh, so very little of that in Delhi. Haridwar found us with one night’s accommodation at the Tourist Bungalow only, tomorrow it is completely filled up.

O Ram, how sweet and loving You are to us. One day later in our arrival and there would have been no accommodations. You are more kind than a mother to her children.

I continue to look for spiritual India. Phyllis and I took a motorized rickshaw looking for ochre shawls. Did not find them, but had a raucous tour-de-force sight seeing trip. The rickshaw driver took us to every nook and cranny, including a temple of Krishna and Rama. The statued images had mirrors on three sides. When you looked to the left or the right it appeared the images were replicated unendingly through the opposite facing mirrors. But, even here, in holy Haridwar, I do not find mystic India. Am I too anxious for it? In Singapore I visited a Moslem Mosque. At first it made no impression. But as I became inwardly quiet, the inner charm of the place grew. Perhaps I will need to be inwardly quiet with India for her to reveal her deeper secrets to me? Perhaps. In any case I know God will forgive me for my impatience. He has seen after us with such loving care. Even now He moves through me while sitting next to His sacred Ganges.

Om.

Sept. 27 Haridwar, 5:00A.M.

So much happened yesterday! I awoke early in the morning and sat by the Ganges. Many middle class people were up walking and jogging when it was still mostly dark outside. A nice looking young man came near and asked permission to sit. He asked if I liked the Ganges. I said yes. (I had in mind the sacred meeting Christine had had two years ago with the man who told her of the location of Lahiri Mahasaya’s Samadhi). He said he walked the Ganges every morning and night. Then he asked what I thought about the affair between President Clinton and Monica Lewinski! I said I thought it was shameful. He said he

didn't know what the problem was, everyone had affairs before and after marriage. This conversation only added to the feeling of disappointment about finding spiritual India. We discussed this for some time. He left and Phyllis joined me. We walked down the Ganges so I could get a picture of the Red Temple at sunrise. A sadhu⁶ asked, "with heartfelt thanks," for us to join him on his blanket. The sadhu told us he had been on that spot for fifteen years. Then he "gave" us some blessed rudraksha beads, then asked for 250 rupees each, over ten times the going rate! He was nothing but a merchant in orange clothes. We declined, and on the way back bought some flowers with a waxed wick in a "boat" of leaves. Lighting the candle I sat the devotional offering in the Ganges saying a prayer:

O Babaji, in the form of Mother Ganges, please lead me to see Spiritual India!

When we returned to the hotel Neelu met us on the stairs and offered to take us to Lahiri Mahasaya's Samadhi⁷ site. I, of course, said yes. We arrived to find a group meditating in front of the great Master's shrine. They were celebrating the mahasamadhi⁸ day (day of his death) of Lahiri Mahasaya, the specialness of the day being quite unknown to us before our arrival! We quietly joined them in their meditation while facing the shrine that held the sacred ashes brought from the funeral pyre of Lahiri Mahasaya by Swami Keshabananda. The sun shone in our faces while on that rooftop, my ajna, third eye point, burned and gratitude filled my heart. The meditation ended with the familiar melodious Aum, Aum, Aum. We all bowed before the picture of Lahiri Mahasaya. B. K. Anand(a), the leader of the group, from YSS⁹ (Yogoda Satsanga Society) in Delhi, turned instant host and we video taped him showing us the area. We then heard some wonderful stories of marvelous events relating to the ashram where we stood.

Among those stories was one regarding the banyan tree where we sat. It had been the place of meditation of Swami Keshabananda, and, indeed, there was a wonderful vibration where we sat. Also, there was a rudraksha tree on the ashram premises which was said to have been planted by Babaji himself. We were told this is especially extraordinary because this tree, that produces the rudraksha beads used by yogis, grows only at higher altitudes. In addition, it is said the deathless Babaji, guru of Lahiri Mahasaya, continues to visit this ashram at least once a year. We were introduced to the security guard of the nearby dam, Sri Vijender Kumar Tyagi, who had seen Babaji at the ashram in March of this very year during the Kumbhamela¹⁰, being held nearby on the banks of the Ganges.

Sri Tyagi told us, through a translator, that while sitting in his guard booth next to the ashram, he felt a spiritual force hit him very strongly for about a minute. After it subsided, he sat wondering at the source of this powerful influence. Again he felt this force, and this time it drew him magnetically along the path from his guard booth to the front gate of the ashram. There he saw the source of this spiritual magnetism in the form of a man standing in front of the gate along with two women. He recognized the man from the picture of the *Autobiography of A Yogi* as that to be Babaji, guru of Lahiri Mahasaya. The intuitive conviction came over him that this was the great yogi Babaji and one of the women Mataji, said to be the sister of Babaji.

Overjoyed by the visit Sri Tyagi escorted the threesome about the grounds of the ashram. Secretly Mr. Tyagi held some hurt regarding Babaji. Previous to this meeting Mr. Tyagi had prayed to Babaji for dowry money for his daughter, since he had none. Babaji had appeared to him in vision and assured him all would be taken care of. Later that night Sri Tyagi found all the rupees needed for the marriage under his pillow. Out of love, Mr. Tyagi prayed ardently that Babaji come to the wedding. Later, when he did not see Babaji at the wedding Mr. Tyagi felt hurt. During Babaji's blessed visit to Keshashram, Sri Tyagi asked Babaji why he had not attended his daughter's wedding. Babaji then went on to describe details of the

wedding that proved to Sri Tyagi that Babaji had indeed been there, in spirit if not in body. This removed the hurt Sri Tyagi had felt. They walked the grounds of the ashram, and as Babaji and company prepared to go they got into a waiting car, a white Maruti¹¹. As the doors of the car closed, Tyagi felt remorse he had not bowed at the feet of Babaji. The door of the car opened back up and out came Babaji's feet, allowing Sri Tyagi his darshan¹². As the door closed again, Sri Tyagi's attention was distracted away from the car for a moment. When he turned back to where the car had been, the car and its occupants had disappeared! Based on my feeling toward this devotee of God, his veracity was not in doubt. Such blessings come for not Sri Tyagi alone, but for all those who hear of this blessed event.

Raj Kumar, a joyful Ram, then told of an English Colonel who, many years ago, wanted the ashram property for constructing a watch tower for a nearby dam. The Colonel took Swami Keshabananda, devotee of Lahiri Mahasaya and builder of this ashram, to court in London. Swami Keshabananda, then living in India, bodily materialized in the court room and petitioned for a fifteen day delay. Fifteen days later in court he again materialized his body in the courtroom. Because of that miracle the Colonel realized he was not dealing with an ordinary person. The legal proceedings to take the property were stopped.

The devotees we met were all love and service to us. The head swami of Keshashram is not associated with the Kriya lineage, but has continued to display the pictures of the masters, Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya, and Keshabananda. Also, a statue of Keshabananda graces the grounds.

O what sweet bliss, what swift answers to a heartfelt prayer!

That day Raj Kumar saw to it that we got another hotel, as the one we were at did not have any openings for this coming night. He put me on the back of his scooter, and we raced off in search of a hotel. We found one with openings that would also accept Westerners. Anand kindly informed us of many Indian customs, many of which we were unaware. He was emphatic we tell hotel clerks and others we met on the trip that Phyllis and I traveled as Guru Bhai and Guru Bhien, spiritual brother and sister. In addition, I should be sure to stay in a room next to Phyllis's as a show of protection. In India, he said, it is not customary for unmarried men and women to travel together. He would not even travel with his own sister as his only traveling companion. Anxious not to bring any dishonor on Mother or the work we did for her, we were sure to announce we traveled as spiritual brother and sister and not invite any wrong assumptions or criticism. We were invited back to Keshashram later that afternoon at 4:00 to meet Anand and Raj Kumar.

We took a 3 wheeler, provided by God in response to Anand's prayer, according to Anand, and went across the wide Ganges to a leper colony. There we met an amazing young devotee of Yoganandaji. This devotee, Ashish, has started a school, the Divya Prem Seva Mission, for the children of lepers. Even though these children are not afflicted with this dreaded disease, the schools in town do not allow them to attend. Along with the school, consisting of three large thatched roof huts built by local people, there is a medical dispensary for lepers. When we arrived the children were standing in neat rows singing devotional songs. We visited a 100 year old swami who blesses the school by living in the compound. He is a bright luminary engrossed in the chanting of Ram Nam¹³. We paid our respects to him with bananas and pranams¹⁴, and moved on to the hut that serves as the temple. More bananas, brought for the occasion, with pranams, all presented to the altar containing pictures of our lineage up to Master, along with Rama and Shiva.

Trampoline-type couches were set up outdoors and tea was served. Ashish said it was Babaji, Lahiri Mahasaya and Master who inspired him to start the school and medical treatment for the leper colony.

Individual YSS members help support it with several thousand rupees every year. It is all privately funded. As we spoke of God, Master and the good work being done here, the setting sun illuminated pointed spires of nearby temples hidden amongst the trees. Then the darkened sky revealed hidden stars shining brightly overhead. The peace and pure aura were pervasive and permeated my soul. Oh, what gratitude welled in my heart! I gave what rupees I had to Ashish and later I sent some things I thought they might find useful. A bicycle rickshaw was “waiting” for us, arranged by Master, out in that remote area. Across the long bridge over the Ganges, crescent moon lighting the sky, sweet smell of burning dung hanging in the air. The beauty of ancient India seemed to light our way back.

Just back to the hotel, and a knock at the door. A 4th year student of Ayurveda from the meditation group had stopped by wanting to know more about practicing medicine in U.S. We took him to his favorite restaurant, just across from his university building. An eatery for students and local people, we attracted not just a few stares. The food was very good. We also stopped in at a temple, attracted by the loud sound of ringing bells and blowing conch shells. The blatant cacophony over, a bright looking renunciant with salt and pepper colored beard and hair, round belly, wrapped in ochre dhoti¹⁵, came over to talk. He had been a businessman for many years and had left everything in his son’s hands in renunciation of worldly pursuits. Now he lives at the temple. He glowed. He proudly spoke of a daughter in St. Louis, U.S.A., whom he had visited last year. On to the Ganges and a star-lit talk of Ayurveda with our young student friend, but my heart was with God.

O Lord, what gratitude fills my heart at such sweet blessings.

This morning I start another day, another adventure. I now hear temple bells complete with blowing conch shells, beating drums and loud chanting. The sounds of the material world begin to compete now with horn toots and some stirring voices and sounds of others.

May Your name be blessed above all others. Om Sri Ram Jai Ram.

Sept. 27 11:00 P.M.

Quite a full day, filled with devotees, love and kindnesses. Meditated under the banyan tree at Keshashram - quite peaceful. On to Dr. Bhagat’s home for satsang¹⁶ with YSS devotees. Many devoted souls, had opportunity to video some of the proceedings and people. They honored me by asking me to read from *Man’s Eternal Quest* for their service. The power of God flowed during the reading and several came up to tell me what a realized yogi I was. Imagine, this Westerner, God’s youngest child, getting praise such as this! Wonderful music from Sri Chakravarty Vijay of Aurobindo Ashram. This humble saint, who seemed to not touch the floor when he walked. He graciously invited us to his Aurobindo Ashram, near Varanasai when we travel to that area. (I regret to say that we were unable to do that.)

Gifts were given to us from Raj Kumar: pictures of Lahiri Mahasaya and Babaji, a candle from Dr. Bhagat’s family (eventually left at Babaji’s cave), an *Autobiography of a Yogi* from the security guard, Sri Tyagi (who had met with Babaji), and a picture of Babaji (black and white) from Anandaji. Due to lateness of the day Dr. Bhagat gave us his car and driver for visiting temples, such as Ananda Moyi Ma’s¹⁷ samadhi, and for the trip to Rishikesh. Anand and Raj Kumar graciously accompanied us as our guides. We got a hotel, visited a Kriya Yoga Ashram and met two bright Swamis with beautiful spiritual eyes. One’s name is Swami Puruananda Giri, who is a disciple of Swami Sadananda Giri, who was a disciple of Master’s. The other Swami practiced repetition of Ram Nam. While visiting these lovely souls, one said through our

translator, Anand, “You must have done a lot of spiritual sadhana in past lives in order to chant Ram Nam and practice spiritual sadhana, especially being all the way from where you live (in America).”

Late dinner, and now I am writing. Phyllis said each day seems like a month of experience, and I completely agree. Anand said he rarely talks these days and does not usually visit devotees. But he has extended himself completely to us. This evening God showed His Light through me to Anand while we sat at dinner. I have come to India as a seeker, not one who teaches or even displays the Light for all to see. But, it seems, in some cases, God sees fit that this Light shine in profusion. As he looked at me I held his gaze, God radiating through me and finally he looked down. He then commented, “You know everything.” Before that moment he had been in the role of the “teacher.” I say this, because, like a child, I find it all so interesting.

Jai Guru.

Sept. 29 6:00 A.M.

Rishikesh, on the other side of the river. The sound of the river Ganga flowing in some rapids and prayers coming over a loud speaker from across the river. I slept on the 2nd story porch because of the heat and humidity made the room oppressive. The body is getting more adjusted to the heat and humidity, but this body is needing recharging. The heat, the noise and pollution of traffic, demands by beggars and constant bargaining for every service and good is a strain. It is good to rest here for now.

A wonderful thought, a realization, came to me the other day after an incident. Anand asked if we could forgive a swami who had done an inappropriate action. We said “Yes, of course.” Later at Professor Bhagat’s home, during meditation, the thought came to me that all of life is like a river, constantly flowing, constantly flowing. It is huge, mysterious and sacred. When we choose not to forgive and to hang on to the past, we inhibit the flow of the river of life within. We deny the freedom of constant change when we hold on to the past. The river Ganges now reminds me of that realization. Like so many times in trying to relate some inner realizations, they seem flat to me as I write them down. But that is the essence of it.

Dewali is a 10 day celebration of Lights, Rama overcoming a demon of darkness. Today is the end of this holy time that has encompassed our entire stay in India. Raj Kumar tells us this is a very blessed time to be in India.

Oct. 2 Dwarahat

Twenty-six hours straight of bus and jeep travel from Rishikesh to Dwarahat. Pilgrimages are those times that try humans’ souls. At least this trip tried ours. We traveled on dirty, noisy buses, had insect bites from head to toe (from who knows what), were riding for hours perched on a seat only half supported, or crammed between two other people on seat built for two at most, not the three or four as we were. It is hot, humid, and traffic was stopped because of a holiday (10th day of Dewali). All that contrasted with the lovely time spent in Haridwar with devotees and their love of Master; the selfless service of Raj Kumar; the hospitality of Anand; the calm presence of Sri Tyagi; and the smiles and sharing of food with fellow pilgrim souls. But, as always, the more important part, is the inner journey. In spite of, or perhaps because of, the difficult outward conditions the silent, constant chanting of Jai Guru, Jai Ram and the affirmation that “all happens by the design of God” never leaves the mind. This inner attunement sustains even the most travel weary soul. Phyllis thought how wonderful it would be to stay in a three or four star hotel in Raniket, but all were full. That led to a Jeep ride to here, Dwarahat, by two lovely souls. Stopped for scenic moments,

and finally arrived at the YSS Ashram. The head ashram swami is Swami Nityananda. Oh, the peace, the feeling of God! Better than any five star hotel by far!

T.K. Aurora¹⁸, just arrived from the Punjab with a group including family and friends. They told of the tragic circumstances in which their homes in Kashmir were looted one night by separatists and then burned to the ground the next night. They moved their families from Kashmir and have made new homes for themselves. T.K. Aurora has been to this ashram before, and is now bringing friends and family for the blessings of this ashram. One of the party also told me that two years previous, while at this ashram, he had a vision of Swami Nityananda in the third eye point. It confirmed for him that Swami Nityananda had attained the spiritual perfection of Master. He went on to say that I am the first person to whom he has related this vision, he had not even told his wife!

O Lord, what blessings you heap on this head! Will my heart hold all this? Only time will tell.

Swami Nityananda has a beautiful spiritual light in his face and his eyes. He told me some of his life's story. He refused to be video taped at this point, he does not want to "propagate" himself. Interested in the spiritual from a young age, he became a Vaishnavite¹⁹. Some of those followers can be bound by orthodoxy as believers in Krishna²⁰. After joining an order he resided in a run down temple. They asked him to go to the Kumbamela to do work there. All he wanted to do was chant and did not feel to submit to their request. He wanted only to chant Sri Krishna's name. So he ended up leaving their order. Reading the *Autobiography of A Yogi*, his life was changed. He had heard of the book before, but it was out of print in India when he first heard of it. Finally finding the book, he found the *Autobiography of A Yogi* widened his focus. It turned out the yoga teacher who gave it to Swamiji had had it loaned to him by a Westerner. The teacher had not read it himself, but acted as a conduit. The Westerner found out from the teacher that Swamiji had read it in about a month. The Westerner spent some days with Swamiji. Swamiji was disappointed to find out only Westerners carried on the leadership of this tradition. The Westerner signed Swamiji up for the lessons, but Swamiji refused. The Westerner said Swamiji was under no obligation to read them, then Swamiji agreed.

Before receiving the lessons Swamiji assumed he heard most of what was in them, thinking he knew it all. He got 8 lessons and read them all immediately. He was impressed how they were laid out and what they contained. Then he heard, after 17 months of getting lessons, that Daya Mata, current president of Self Realization Fellowship/ YSS, was coming to India. After meeting her, having read the *Autobiography of A Yogi* and the lessons, he realized he had never before been so happy. He decided to follow this path. He has been the ashram swami for 2 ½ years, the ashram being built in the late 1970's. Swami Nityananda has a gentle mein, a laugh that comes from someplace deep in the belly, bright skin and bright eyes. I think he is wonderful. Perhaps in the next few days I can get him on videotape.

Well, this body is fatigued. 1 ½ hours sleep in the last 2 days and all the travel. I am glad Ram got us here today, although I was disappointed at first not finding a hotel this morning. Right outside my window is a flowering bush called the Night Queen. It blooms and smells only at night and has a powerfully perfumed fragrance. It is wafting her fragrance toward me now. Snakes too are enchanted and will wind themselves around her trunk, intoxicated with her perfumed presence.

Om Shanti²¹

October 3

The other day Raj Kumar introduced me as a “great yogi”. Why he said this I do not know. I certainly do not feel this way. I do feel like a small child, being led by God with a great and overwhelming desire to have my oneness with God. That is, to have that certain knowledge of my direct link with God, without flaw, without a misstep, living in that Presence at all times. It is all due to God’s Grace, even my desire for Him is by God and Guru’s Grace. Who could say anything different? From the beginning, what has propelled me on this path has been a force beyond me. The Swami at the Kriya Ashram in Rishikesh, who chanted God’s name, said I must have had good samskaras, (past life tendencies), to be drawn to chanting Sri Ram. Swami Nityananda said Master wrote that many souls from the East are now being born in the West, as well as from the West to the East. Perhaps this explains this attraction so many souls in the West have had for Eastern teachings? Those who have had those past lives in India and the East recognize and know the truth when they hear it. Oh, so many mysteries in life, how shall we know unless God reveals them to us?

Aum Shanti!

Oct. 3 -cont-

Swami Nityananda spoke to Phyllis, and two other devotees, a young couple - he originally from America and she from Switzerland. He seemed to speak mostly to the couple. His main points included:

*Life is filled with pain and death
The soul continues to incarnate
The world is made up of thought
Spiritual progress requires effort*

I felt the vibration of his voice resonating in my heart center, I had this experience the day before with him. I felt uplifted, barely able to keep my eyes open. He said afterward to me, “I enjoy you being here.” Why he said this, I don’t know? I believe there are some truths he is holding back. I don’t know if he will say. He has a fickle nature, or perhaps he has other considerations. He has said I may not take video on these grounds or videotape him, that may be a gesture of his humility. But, he also took a letter he sent to me in America and is now reluctant to give it back, saying, “What do you need it for now, it has served it’s purpose.” He did say, with others in the room, he wanted to give me an Indian stamp with Master’s picture on it. He takes with one hand and gives with another. Such is the mystery of God’s Lila²², His play. Perhaps, the thought just came, he is testing my ego nature. Yes, that has a fit to it. Well, the game is afoot!

Story from Swami Nityananda: A Preacher and a taxi cab driver died on the same day and both went to heaven. The taxi cab driver had a place way ahead of the preacher in the line getting into heaven. The preacher noticing this complained to one of the angels. He said, “All those years I preached the word of God, and now, now that I stand before this gate, this cab driver is way ahead of me. Where is the fairness in this?!” The angel answered calmly, “The facts are simply this: often when you preached of God, many slept. When this man drove his cab, **everyone** prayed!”

I wanted to make a note of Mr. Tiagy, the security guard who saw Babaji. I stood next to him, and felt he was an extraordinary man. There was no doubt about the fact he had integrity.

Oct. 3 - cont-

I sat on the rooftop, just short of a full moon lit the clear skied night. The evening started at 5:30 when Swamiji rang the hand held bell and performed an arati²³, waving a burning lamp and then a sacred broom before the altar of Krishna and Radha. He then led us in energization exercises outdoors. We moved to the meditation hall where he also performed arati and waving the sacred broom in front of the pictures of our lineage of Masters, played the harmonium and led us in Master's chants, then meditation until 7:00. A light dinner, soup and chapati, water, and papaya chutney (spicy). The boy who works at the ashram literally ran to the meditation hall after the meal to play the harmonium and sing chants. I joined him with concurrent emotional fervor. Then up to the rooftop in the full moon. Tears welled up, thoughts of how I have let God down came to me, sincere sorriness in my heart, humbleness.

O Lord, I am nothing. Grace comes to the undeserving. Please Lord, let it come to me.
I yearn to see You, know Your constant Presence. Come to me! Make me Your very own.

In this way I spoke to God. Perhaps the Masters will not listen, I am too beneath their concern. But I know the eternal God, my constant friend and companion, even when I do not measure up, is there comforting me in my great need for Him alone.

O Babaji, tomorrow we go for darshan of the place where you initiated Lahiri Mahasaya. I have purged with fever in Rishikesh, now tears on the rooftop. I know I am undeserving of Your Grace, but please know I want to love and serve You with everything in my heart.

Jai Guru is constantly in my heart and mind.

Oct. 4 YSS Ashram

Up early this morning. Swamiji was doing energization exercises in the pre-dawn night, barely saw him as all was black. Up on the rooftop. Lost in meditation. Suddenly, as if on cue there was an explosion of sound: crickets, the coo-coos, chirps and songs of birds. I opened my eyes and saw light had come. Then smoke swirled over the second story flat roof of the ashram building. Voices came floating up with the smoke from below. The Punjab group, Aurora another man and two boys were heating water. It is done in a wood heated stove that water is poured into, heated, then comes out a spout boiling hot into a pail. A simple beginning to the day of our visit to Babaji's cave.

Oct. 4 YSS Ashram -cont-

Well, we made the Himalayan cave where, it is said, Babaji initiated Lahiri Mahasaya. I feel so proud of Phyllis. A year ago a walk around her long block was almost more than she could do. Today, 95 lbs. lighter, she made it through the ups and downs and uneven footing, 2 mi. each direction! Well, quite an accomplishment, at nearly 8,000 ft.! While there, meditating in the cave, I felt such a deep vibration, low, rumbling, powerful, at the base chakra²⁴. Like heavy machinery working deep beneath the mountain the vibration was resonating powerfully in my spine and body. It has come back to me several times today, including the long meditation (5:30-8:30) tonight. It was not without its oppositional force however! The mind was whirling with attachment thoughts of Babaji appearing and other miraculous occurrences I secretly harbored, almost unconsciously. The ego was attached to some high adventure outcome. But on reflection in meditation, I came to see the gift of that vibration felt in the cave as truly profound and

powerful. Focusing on that vibration, visions of the Masters kept coming to me. Beyond those visions I asked but for one thing: the Universal Vision.

Babaji's cave is actually on Pandu Khuli (Place of Pandus), not Dronagiri as commonly reported. I was told Dronagiri is more widely known and that is why the cave is referred to as being there. Historically, Dronagiri is the mountain (giri) where Drona, the martial arts teacher of the Pandu's had meditated. Pandu Khuli was the place where the Pandu's, including Arjuna of the Bhagavad Gita, had gone during their thirteenth year of exile. They were sentenced to twelve years living in the wilderness. The thirteenth year they were to hide, and if found, would be sentenced to further exile.

Back at the ashram, while taking a tea break, Phyllis was in a conversation with two YSS devotees from Nepal. When she spoke of Mother as being our Guru, they responded with the Self Realization Fellowship (SRF) version of Master, (Paramhansa Yogananda) being the last Guru of this lineage. For some reason upon hearing this, in combination with Swami Nityananda's glowing descriptions of Daya Mata, put the whole question regarding the Kriya lineage in my mind. I surrendered the whole question to Master during the visit to Babaji's cave. Inwardly, I submitted myself to Master's direction, whatever the outcome.

After I returned to the ashram I sat looking at Master's "last smile" picture that hung in my room. A Light came from that picture that revealed an inner essence of Master's Divinity. This Light of Master supported an experience while on the mountain. It was there I had the memory come very powerfully into my mind, as a revelation, of Master's letter to Mother. In that letter Master spoke of giving Mother permission to give Kriya initiation, diksha. He went on to say that hers was to be a **new** dispensation of a **new** order of SRF. This memory combined with the "friendly Light" coming from Master's picture confirmed for me that what Mother had from Master was unique and separate from SRF. This I felt came directly from Master and resolved all doubts. Gratitude for Master's direct guidance was in my heart. Not satisfied with reciting by rote other's truths, I received directly from Master what I needed to resolve my doubts.

Thank you Master for your love, care and guidance. I pray that you make me a fit instrument for carrying out your work. Jai Gurus

So, it's been quite a day again! We shall see what the 'morrow brings. As I sat on the rooftop tonight, the full moon had a planet on its right. I talked all my quandaries over with God. You know, the test has been around separation with God. There is something around the SRF/YSS mind set that produces an effect in me that makes God feel distant. I worked on eliminating that distance. First, I acknowledged that sense of distance. Then, I reached out to that intimate Presence. A feeling of the Presence of God came within. Now I am feeling much better. Mother always made God seem close, accessible. He most certainly is tonight.

Thank you Mother. Jai Ram. Jai Gurus.

P.S. The young girls from the Punjab group have a nickname for me. In their own language they call me "smiley", because I always seem to have a smile. They also gave me some fruit and a lemon drop candy. God is so kind through so many.

Om Shanti

Oct. 5 YSS Ashram

I asked Swami Nityananda if he would comment on Kundalini²⁵ and meditation experiences. His stance is that he has not had any meditation experiences and is not qualified to give advice. If I should want information such as that, I should ask Swami Sudrananda (sp?), a Westerner that heads YSS, and who, Swami Nityananda said, is a realized person. Swamiji is right, of course, not to give advice if he has not had experience. But I deeply feel Swamiji is hamstrung in bringing the Light of God that is within him by organizational protocol. He says he only repeats what “Guruji” has written. Spiritual parrots are not what Master wanted, of this I am sure!

Standing atop the roof of the ashram, the full moon shines brightly in the dark sky. The moon is directly between two brightly lit planets, all rising over silhouetted Dronagiri. One planet on the horizon (Venus?) the other planet heaven bound. I am praying to Babaji for something, I do not know what, to manifest before me. To give me Universal Vision? A miraculous experience, both? In that prayer I am feeling such unity with Babaji. Meanwhile a drunk man and his son are walking up the road past the ashram. The slurred yelling of the father, the pleading of a boy, sounds of maybe some hits. It is late and the ashram doors are locked, so I may not go out. I pray to God and the Masters, I charge them with seeing to it to keep that boy safe and to fulfill the highest good of everyone concerned. I pray hard! The yelling and pleading continue as they walk up the hill past the ashram. Will the boy be all right? Oh maddening thoughts. I chastise God for this scene, repeated all over the world. I demanded that He stop it! While chastising God in this way, I see one of the “boys”, who works at the ashram, finish his ceaseless activities (both boys work hard all day) and stands in full moon light in front of the Radha/Krishna temple, doing energization exercises.

O Lord, such contrasting scenes. Your ways are beyond reason.

Up on the hill beyond the ashram, several men’s voices are heard, the drunk man’s voice is there too. Clearly the other men have intervened. Perhaps the boy is safe, and his family too?

Lord, I charge you with changing the drunk man’s life. You see to it that it is taken care of. You have made this prayer demand through me. You must fulfill it!

Oct. 6 3:30 A.M. YSS Ashram

I was paying a return nocturnal visit to my beloved rooftop. God awoke me at 1:00 A.M. or so. I felt inwardly prompted to go. The two planets have followed the moon. The planets positioned as to be the two earthly eyes and the full moon, the ajna. Dronagiri and all the landscape are brilliantly lit by the midnight orb. Babaji and the Masters seem close. A light on top of Dronagiri from the temple stands star like on the mountain-silhouetted horizon. Spiritually charged vibrational storms run through the ethers. O blessed events, my gratitude goes to my Heavenly Father. I send these blessings to all God has given me in America and elsewhere, wherever they may be.

Oct. 8 Agra

Our trip down from Dwarahat was excruciating. My medulla was throbbing with pain. I felt the crushing vibrations of humanity as we closed in on the lower land cities. It is easy to see why yogis pick the mountainous region of Dronagiri in which to live and meditate. We took the winding road down to the city, then found out we had been directed to the wrong train station. We took a 3 wheeler to a van area. A very

small mini-van took over 21 of us, including our luggage! We disembark and were greeted with one after the other taxi drivers and porters trying to jack prices up. The 3 wheeler took us within a block of where we wanted to go, then demanded 10 extra rupees to take us the rest of the way! We did not know how far it was but refused, got a bicycle rickshaw for 5 rupees. Then a man got a porter to carry our things for 5 rupees for less than a 100 feet! Oh, in the hills they do not bargain, they are truthful and helpful. On the way down, while I was in so much pain, I thought,

Lord, I am out to suffer all pain in Your name.

This got me through it. Then when the trials with people started, I thought,

O Lord, You are teaching me to see past all people and situations. It is You alone who exists, both as this passing show, and, beyond it, in the formless state.

Amongst swamis and seekers there are few who have realized this great Truth.

O Papa, how grateful I am for your eminently practical and personal teachings on this matter. How it changes my life in God.

O Master, how glad I am to see your work grow and spawn good works in this world.

O line of Guru's, how blessed I am to have been touched by your lives.

O Mother, you are my mantra, Jai Guru, who has made all possible.

Oct. 8 Agra -cont-

We saw the Taj Mahal yesterday. It was when I got close to it that I felt the greatest impact. I was awe struck. Something of the symmetry, the proportions, the materials, all in combination, nearly took my breath away. I do believe it to be the most perfect structure I have ever seen, and I dare say the most beautiful building in the world. It is architectural poetry. We also saw the fort of Agra. One can easily imagine proud Muslim soldiers marching on horses up those ancient brick pathways. One mention of all the countless ways Ram, our consummate tour guide, has looked after us with the sweetness of a Loving Mother. When I had some slight diarrhea yesterday, He provided bathroom locations (public bathroom facilities are not common in India) both times I was in dire need.

O what sweetness You look after us! Each step You are our guide, friend, beloved, consummate tour guide. O blessed Lord, continue to show us You are equally present everywhere. Keep us in Your assurance that You are with us always. Aum God Christ
Guru

Oct. 8 - cont.

Well the day has been one of Krishna's tricks. At the train station in Agra, on our way to Brindaban, a bird made a deposit all down the back of Phyllis! The train was 2 hours late and my long anticipated visit to Brindaban had no outwardly uplifting aspect to it at all! Well, the end was worthy of its beginning. After a long bus ride back from Brindaban, a drunk 3 wheel driver took us all over Agra through darkened streets late at night. The driver either wouldn't or couldn't take us to our hotel, The Major Bashik. On a dark road, I finally said, "That's it, I will find another cab." I had already used my most powerful voice on him to take us to our hotel **now**, to no avail. We came to a store, where some friends came to our aid. The

3 wheeler driver continued to follow us, offering to take us to our hotel at almost twice the agreed upon price! Jitender Chadda put us **both** on the back of his small motor scooter! While Phyllis tried to find a peg for her foot, with skirt flying and an uncertain hold, she was asking to stop. We flew through unknown darkened streets. We left larger streets and Jitender took us on smaller darkened back streets and finally to a dead end alley. What now?!

The scooter parked, he opened a door and he went in without a word. Trust in God is most needed at such times. Due to the electricity being out, only a single lamp was burning inside the room on the other side of the door. As I peered in I saw children there. Jitender was talking to a woman and up on the wall hung two framed pictures, one of Guru Nanak and one of Guru Govind Singh. As it turned out Jitendra did not know where our hotel was, even though he had said “yes, yes” when we asked if he knew the way. He had driven straight to his aunt’s home to get directions. The aunt was very kind, they are devotees of Sikh Guru Govind Singh. A phone call to the hotel brought fresh directions and we were off once again. The three of us riding the dark streets on a small motor scooter, Phyllis still struggling to stay on would have made a comic sight to an observer! Jitendra brought us safely to our hotel. He is truly a servant of his Gurus. We were tired, dirty, and without dinner. The hotel made up a dinner for Phyllis. I am now washed and going to hit the bed. I am thankful we are here safe through the grace of God and Gurus.

Jai Ram, Jai Gurus.

Oct. 9

The theme of yesterday’s adventures was a quote from Krishna, “lost in the common life.” Over and again that quote came to me. On the bus a friendly man who worked for Indian Airlines “congratulated” us for taking the bus to see how the “average” man lives. People were very kind to us everywhere, making sure we got off at the right places, etc., often sharing food. So much love, being “lost in the common life.”

Oct. 9 - cont- South bound train

I am on the top bunk of a gently rocking and rolling train car. We are on our way to Shirdi. Ram, in the form of a fellow passenger by name of Mr. Pande is a railway station manager at Pune. He is our bunkmate and when we told him of our destination he gave perfect instructions on how to get to Shirdi, etc. He has also commanded us to go to the South point of India, where Vivekananda meditated on a rock for three days. He is the second person to tell me of the south point of India and I am feeling the pull to go. Oh, so many ways God has come, giving help at the right times, telling of saints and adventures that have enriched our trip. For instance, Sanjeev Mathur, the owner of the email site in Agra, on hearing we were on a spiritual pilgrimage told me of his trip from Chompa, high in the Himalayas and how a sadhu saved their lives.

Sanjeev, his father and his uncle were waiting for many hours early in the morning to get the express bus leaving from Chompa, a remote Himalayan village. The other bus leaving some time earlier was a local bus that makes many more stops, often stopping and waiting a half hour while an individual climbs down from a hill top to get to the bus. While at a stop, the local and express bus were parked together. A sadhu who had been riding the local bus told the three of them they should ride in the local bus, not the express bus. Sanjeev and his father were not in favor of making the switch, but the uncle said they should not go against the wish of the sadhu. They switched to the local bus. A short time after both buses got underway. The leading express bus, the one they just got off of, missed a corner and careened over a thousand foot drop.

When the second bus stopped, and they all saw the tragic fate of the first bus, the sadhu explained that when he saw the passengers of the express bus at the stop he saw the “mark of death” on all of the passengers except Sanjeev, his father and uncle. It was then he had asked them to change buses. They looked down the cliff to observe the certain fate of all the others they had been riding with. When they turned back around the sadhu was no where to be seen. As they wanted to thank the sadhu, they looked for him and asked other passengers of the local bus where that sadhu had gone. Not one of the local bus passengers had even seen the sadhu at all! It was then the deepened mystery of this strange incident grew even bigger in their minds. Their gratitude to God, who they felt had come in the form of the visible/invisible sadhu was evident in Sanjeev’s recounting of this story.

Sanjeev went on to relate another remarkable incident when his father took him to see a holy man, Mansa Maharaja. Mansa told Sanjeev many accurate things about his life. The saint also made the prediction that Sanjeev’s father would not live past 1994. Sanjeev Mathur’s father was in apparent good health and spirits on the day of Nov. 19, 1994. His father took a rest. Sanjeev went to wake his father and when he lifted his father’s hand it fell limp, no longer was the body inhabited by his father’s soul. Sanjeev recounted the story more in awe than grief. How wonderful the book of life is being opened at every turn to demonstrate the great mystery that life is! God has guided and helped us in so many ways, too many to describe. The train has stopped a minute, makes writing easier. Started again so will sign off.

Oct. 11 Ahmednagar

Well, God has provided a nice hotel for us. In America it would be a step up from a Motel 6, but for our recent stays this is a definite improvement (India has, of course, beautiful hotels, but we tend to stay in the hotels that were inexpensive but decent). It is clean, has carpets, **no** smell of mold, restaurant is good and reasonable, and quiet with some nice 60’s “deco” decor. The nicest hotel we have been to yet. Sai Baba and Meher Baba are taking very nice care of us. I think we will spend one more night. Our travel schedule has been quite intense, I think Phyllis in particular needs some rest time. So if it is available, for 350 rupees a night this is a bargain (about \$8.30 U.S.). It was recommended by friends on the bus. When Ram is your ever present guide, friends are everywhere met!

Sai Baba’s temple was really remarkable. We stood in line for an hour out in the intense sun, while an arati was sung indoors. Phyllis thought she was going to faint and thought of turning back, but her brave soul continued. Up some stairs and through some roped off lines, a statue of Sai Baba was sitting, porcelain faced, with such a presence. The air was “charged” with spiritual vibration. Devotees there from all over India. We saw more devotional fervor there than any other place we have been to yet. Devotees armed with flowers, fruit and money streamed in to the front and sides of Sai Baba’s statue. The statue-altar is manned by four priests. They were busy accepting and redistributing the flowers and gifts. I prostrated on all fours, bowing in Indian style before the carved form of this great Master. I felt the purifying blessing come as I prayed for my complete God Realization. I backed up, and again bowed down. Oh, what sweet blessings come from that moment. Two such moments stand out to me now, one yesterday with Sai Baba, the other at Babaji’s cave. Both affecting me at the deepest levels around the spine. Sai Baba affected me in the spine opposite of the navel. Babaji resonated at the base of the spine.

O Papa, you spoke of the blessings that come from saints and their darshans. In both of these cases no embodied saints were present, but what blessings. And living saints we have met awaken that same Divinity within. How right you are in making this advice. And, too, how God is taking me around the world to find friends everywhere! To find Your

Presence **everywhere!** O Blessings are so abundantly poured upon this head. Om
Brahma, Om Guru, Om Master, Om Om Om.

One humorous note. Last night I had **American** chow mein. That is how it is listed on the menu. It wasn't bad. Some break from Indian food was welcome. Yesterday lunch I had masala dosa, best food I have had in India. The restaurant (Jeevan Hotel restaurant, near Sai Baba Temple) was recommended by a friend on the street. Ram is in every form!

Jai Guru

Oct. 15 Anandashram

Several months of normal time must have passed since the 11th (last journal entry!) Day after Sai Baba's darshan we visited the samadhi (place of burial) of Meher Baba. A three wheeler took us over 7K to a nondescript spot on the road, a sign pointed up a hill saying: "Samadhi this way up." A dispute with the cab driver over the agreed amount of payment spilled over to the ashram grounds. The demand of the driver, double what we had agreed when we started, was supported by an ashramite sitting on the porch, so I paid so as not to further disturb the peace of that place. The driver gone, we were directed by the American manager of the Meher Baba Ashram to the samadhi. We also paid for our lunch that was to be served at 1:00. Walking up the path, past railroad tracks and up a gentle slope, I felt the peace of this land. Clearly the place of one who was established in God Consciousness. What strange mystery there is for the heart attuned to such vibrations. Peace, purity, upliftment all create an atmosphere vibrant in every atom of space. The samadhi—small in size but packed with vibration. A devotee had said it is the power center of the earth now. I will leave such analysis for other minds. Like yeast, the peace of this place worked slower on me at first—then with increasing power. Movement in the spine, and upliftment of consciousness, the likes of which I have not had since my coming to India, moved through me. Since coming to India I have been much more centered in my body with access to the cognitive mind's survival skills! This brief interlude at Meher Baba's samadhi confirms for me that the absorption in inner experiences I had before coming to India is not compatible with the rigors of travel here.

O Lord, what sweet blessings You have bestowed upon me by giving me exactly what I need when I need it! All my strength and mindfulness have been needed for this journey.

I have tried to call Mr. Pande, our station master friend from the train. The number does not seem to be good. His advice was perfect for getting to Shirdi and Meherabad and he had asked us to see him in Pune. Since I could not reach him by phone we decide to go to Pune and find him at the train station. Upon arriving at the Pune station we found no one has heard of him! The stationmaster called the freight yard to see if he works there. No one has heard of him there either! He said he was the stationmaster at Pune, gave us **perfect** instructions for getting to Shirdi and Meherabad and Anandashram, and now no such person exists!

O Ram, You are in all, operating in all. Now You are substantial to our senses, then gone!
Who can gainsay Your methods?

The "more than substantial" stationmaster of Pune took us in hand and directed our travel course across India to the east and south. Once on the train we received much needed directions from Dr. S. Narayana Iyer, professor of electrical engineering, retired, and were put on the right track at Trichur for a connecting

train going north to Anandashram. We learned later the substantial stationmaster sent us by a route that took us an extra day and much further south than we needed to go. Mr. Pande had once again given us perfect instructions. His route would have saved us one day of travel and been more direct. By the longer route to the south we arrived at Anandashram after 45 hours of train travel on October 14. On meeting Larry at the ashram, he informed us that Mother had arrived at Anandashram on October 14, 1957, from Trichur! Although we were unaware of it, God saw to it we arrived on the same month and day, and from the same direction and town, as Mother did forty-one years earlier!

What a tour guide You are Ram! Every detail You look after so that we might honor our great Guru in every way.

At Anandashram we were received with all love and kindness by Swami Satchidananda, Larry and Cate. In a private interview I told Swamiji that I felt there was something I was to receive here at the ashram, and I had come for the Universal Vision alone. He said, "You will get everything!" This was the assurance I wanted and will demand of God and the Masters. I want the purity of Consciousness that will allow me to love and serve God perfectly. Nothing less! I am here for this purpose. I have come to receive the blessings of the saints of this great spiritual land to purify body, heart, mind and soul. Today Kathy and Elaine arrived, tired, stunned and filled with God. Larry, Cate and I accompanied them for darshan with Swamiji. Elaine brought Papa's tape that Michael Victory had "cleaned up" for me. I told Swamiji of a dream I had last night. In it, we were in a large room with devotees. Some dark men came in making trouble. Swamiji stepped forward to calm the situation. I remained back because I was new and did not understand the language. The rough men got more agitated when army soldiers arrived and escorted the rough men out. Swamiji was clearly weakened by the effort. I wanted to help and he took my arm as we walked toward the other end of the room, away from where the confrontation had happened. The dream ended.

Then I presented Swamiji with the tapes of Papa's recorded voice and their history of how they had been "cleaned" of background noise to make them easier to listen to. He wanted them played and we listened for a few minutes until the electricity went out (a common event). Battery lights on, we continued the conversation. Swamiji reminisced about his trip with Papa and Mataji to Seattle and Mother's home in 1954. It was then that Papa spoke of three ways a saint blesses: by touch, sight and thought. Mother then requested Papa to bless everyone there that night. Upon our leaving I asked Swamiji if he would bless us in the same way. He laughed and said he had not become Papa yet. I countered with saying that Papa and God would bless us through him. He said that was the attitude he had when he blessed others. He then said we must be hungry and we should go and eat. I stood up and bowed/pranamed over the little box in front of him waiting for my blessing. He laughed and gave me a hit on the top of the head. Then in succession each one got their blessing. Now, hours later, I feel on the top of my head the touch of that hit, magnetized in blessings of God and the Masters!

O blessed Lord, You play Your drama before us, trying to tempt us away with the passing show. We see through Your veiled attempts at estranging us and we see You are all powerful and merciful. You see to our every need, physically and spiritually. All Glory to You and victory to Your Light of Lights. Jai Ram

Oct. 16

One or two updates. During the time of visiting Shirdi Sai Baba, I had a thousand rupees disappear from a “cargo” pocket, the flap sealed with two velcro attachers. The prevailing belief is that Sai Baba extracted the amount from me. If so, so be it! The other prevailing idea is that Mr. Pande, the man who gave perfect instructions and then was known by no one where he said he was the “station manager”, is thought by Phyllis to have been Sai Baba or an intermediary angel. (One side note to this story is that Pande was reading the *Autobiography of A Yogi* while we were traveling with him).

O sweet Ram, what wonderful mysteries You present to the mind. You alone know the truth of such things and sometimes You reveal them to the minds of Your bhaktas²⁶ or anyone You wish. You work miracles in the name of Your saints, with or without their knowledge. Because they have given their lives to You, You feel free to use them as You will! Such is the ease of relationship between the lover and beloved. And who can say who is Who!? God as lover, God as beloved. Is there a difference? Do not roles switch to and fro? Oh indeed, what sweet mysteries You use to enthrall Your bhaktas. Hari Om, Hari Om, Hari Om. Peace, Shanti. Peace, Shanti. Peace, Shanti!

Oct. 16 -cont-

Two of Papa’s stories have played out today. In seeming concert of, “as in the inner - so the outer” Papa is in our hearts as well as our outer lives.

Story #1: In the bhajan hall stood a small girl. She stood and cried, lost to her mother. Every direction she looked, but her mother remained hidden to her gaze as she was in a passage behind the altar. Different adults pointed the way for her to go, but she did not budge. When her mother heard the repeated cries of her child she came in high speed to the source of those urgent cries and took her little one by the hand and led her back from where the mother had come.

O Lord, You show us so many ways to seek You, but could there be any more sincere, direct and simple way than to cry for the Divine Mother and demand She come to us? Did not the father of the prodigal son come out to meet him on his return only to lead him home to a prepared feast?

Story # 2: Three crows were flying together as I entered the Arunachala causeway. One crow had a delectable item cherished by itself **and** two other crows in hot pursuit. The crow with the prize could know no peace as long as he held anything coveted by the others! Second object lesson: the belief in ownership causes stress and anxiety for one, and jealousy and greed for others.

O Papa, you play your informative stories out in front of me. You display glories for those who have eyes to see.

Oct. 16 -cont-

I inwardly asked Mataji’s spirit for understanding of her nature, finding it to be a void in my mind. I asked this during the closing ceremony of her mandir (the building constructed over the place where her body was cremated; there are mandirs for both Mataji and for Papa). As we circumambulated the mandirs, chanting Om Sri Ram, Jai Ram, Jai Jai Ram, led by Sri Ram, Papa’s grandson, the answer came to me

doubly! Mataji came in my prayer and showed me her role is to make the feminine Shakti merge from the base of my spine with the ajna, to unite duality into eternal oneness. Then, as I passed Papa's mandir, he came into my mind so seamlessly, so beautifully, and revealed to me that his essence is to merge me into absolute purity of Oneness. Oh what perfection, the Mother to resolve her play of polarity, and the Father is the Eternal purity of the Self.

O Papa, Mataji, thank you for your blessings, for revealing your true natures to me at least in some small measure. You are my path **and** my goal. Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram!

Oct. 16 -cont-

There was a woman at the ashram with many spiritual questions. She was directed by others to talk to me. When we first met she said how much Light she saw in Phyllis and I, and especially in Phyllis. Indeed I looked at Phyllis and noticed a beautiful glow emanated from her face. She asked about a meditation technique. I spoke to her about taking the attitude of knowing that all thoughts, feelings and situations come from God. To cultivate love and devotion for God. She spoke of the tears she has shed for God in her sadhana, with some fear in her voice. I assured her tears for God are for the good, and each one is like a pearl on the necklace of Krishna. Those tears will purify the body, mind and soul, and love and joy will be the result. Like a boil on the body drains pus until it is cleansed, then is followed by clean, pure blood, so do emotional toxins need to be drained until the feeling of purity, joy, bliss and wisdom of God comes.

She came back and asked about initiation. Although she has a teacher at her home, he has never spoken of initiation. I talked to her about the Guru-disciple relationship. A spiritual teacher or Guru gives initiation in order to teach specific techniques for realization of God. The power that comes from the Guru to the disciple during initiation proves to be an indissoluble link for the Sat Guru and disciple. The mystery of a "seed" is planted at that time through the Guru which surely bears fruit, either in this lifetime, or some other, as Self-Realization. And finally, the Guru should be the example of the teachings they profess. The student/disciple makes a commitment to follow the teachings of the teacher/Guru until they reach their goal of Realization. They show loyalty and surrender by following those teachings in all they say, think or do. Inner attunement with the Guru leads to inner attunement with God. The Guru acts as a conduit to the Infinite until the disciple has established that clear link within themselves. It is then revealed to the devotee that the Presence of the Guru and God are not different. In fact, the Presence felt in all God-men and God-women are one and the same as God's Presence. But, even as a child may go to visit the homes of their friends and receive their love, they never mistake their friends families for their own. The same is true for the sadhaka²⁷. They always have special reverence for their own Guru and their line of Gurus, even with gaining the Universal Vision.

I explained our tradition. She is thoughtful, and expressed she felt a pure energy in her heart and at the top of her heart at the end of our talk. It was indeed a blissful time.

All glory to God and Guru. It is by their grace that I may give of any portion of Spirit as they give so freely through me. Jai Ram, Jai Guru!

Oct. 17

Search for God is a serious matter, a no more difficult journey can there be. It is not a journey of the body, yet the body serves as the vehicle. It is not a journey of the mind, yet the mind is used to focus the attention.

It is, essentially, a journey of spirit. Not a journey in the sense of going somewhere. Spirit is equally present everywhere. It is a journey in terms of moving “through” distractions that pull the attention of the mind toward the body and worldly concerns. When the mind is focused on the single Reality, bent on realizing the Truth of Truths, then results accrue of their own accord. The devotee’s single hearted desire for God becomes like a thief’s desire. The thief one day finds himself lodged in a room of a large mansion. He hears from the servants that the room next to his is filled with treasures of gold, silver and gems. Do you believe he could rest or think of anything else other than how to break in and get the treasure for himself? No, he would be consumed night and day with the sole thought of how to slip into that room and make those treasures his own. This same obsession should be in full residence for one seeking God. The mind absorbed in the one thought, “How can I steal in and get God’s Grace so I may reside eternally in His Light?” Then will the aspirant find the indwelling spirit and live in Its Glory.

Oct. 19 Anandashram 4:00 A.M.

A waking dream/vision: I saw the back of two or three figures, tall (?)²⁸, thin, long hair, walking away, just in front of me, going through an opening. Suddenly I saw the copper tint of their hair. Babaji! I knew somehow of a connection between Babaji and Swami Satchidananda. Should I pursue Babaji? Should I press Swamiji for fulfillment of my desire to be one with Babaji? Papa’s example comes to mind, “Be like the kitten, sitting, meowing for its mother.” God has made me in His “Likeness and His image.” I am the personal expression of His Prakriti²⁹ power, and I am the impersonal universal Spirit. God has given me this desire to know the visible-invisible Babaji, but through Mother and Papa’s example, I want to know his impersonal, universal spirit more. I sit, I chant, I know Babaji knows my heart, my desire. He is fulfilling it in the highest way possible. I wait like a small child, the kitten, knowing that all is being done for me and mine is to keep my mind on God, intent on the Universal Vision.

O sweet Lord, I pray but for one thing. Purify this body, mind and soul so that it might see
Your light as the All in All. Even this I leave to Your whim and law as You see fit to fulfill.

Oct. 19 - cont-

Swami Vishwananda arrived full of intent and purpose. He described his first meeting with Larry two years previous. Swamiji (Satchidananda) had asked Swami Vishwananda to stay an extra day at the ashram the day before Larry’s arrival. In the mid-afternoon, Swami Vishwananda was “made” to leave his room “in the heat of the day” and go to the reception area of the ashram. “Normally, no one arrived at that time.” A taxi arrived with Larry and his luggage as its contents. When Larry got down from the taxi Swami V. said “Hi”, that’s it, just “Hi.” Then, “Have you had lunch?” “Yes.” “Do you want some water?” “Yes.” “I took him to my room for water. Then on to Papa’s room. He knelt before Papa’s picture, and said, “O God! O Jesus! O God! O Jesus!” I touched him and felt an electrical charge. I left the ashram 3 hours later, and thought about him all the way home.” “Excuse me,” he said to Cate, Larry’s wife, “but I am closer than you are to him. We were married in front of Papa!” This conversation is our introduction to Swami Vishwananda. At 78, full of energy, direct and purposeful.

Larry has been assigned by Swami Vishwananda as “trip Guru.” I later told Larry I sign over to him “power of attorney” for decisions regarding this trip. I am but God’s child in this matter, and the decisions are better made by others. I feel I can better sit in the back seat than the driver seat. Nevertheless, God occasionally calls me out to be in the front too. It reminds me of Papa’s words spoken by Gopi in the daily reading yesterday. Papa wrote, “Don’t be attached to any state of samadhi. Treat every experience as coming from God. This leads to the Universal Vision.” Such wisdom in these words. To stay, to go, to be

in front, to be in back, what does it matter? I sometimes have my preference, I sometimes have drives, but **everything** I surrender at the feet of God.

O Lord, You think, feel, talk and act through me. Without fear I follow. I do my best according to the abilities You have given me. My eyes are fixed on You alone. Fulfill Your promise and transform this life to perfectly reflect Your image and likeness. Victory to God and Gurus.

Oct. 21 Anandashram

Tomorrow eve we leave this abode of bliss for our tour north. I have asked Swamiji for time today with him alone. Kathy has fit into the ashram like a hand in a glove. She treated the ashram with Frootis. They are a packaged mango drink that children and the adults love. There was some left over, and we took them to a nearby school, founded by Swamiji, for mentally retarded children and deaf children. They put on a performance of dance that was wonderful, and then Frootis and balloons were handed out to all. Kathy wanted to do it anonymously but she was thrust to the front by Swamiji. As she handed out the drinks she reported feeling inwardly blessed with each child. Jianth (sp.?), an ashram inmate and former businessman helped Larry procure the drinks. Swamiji has been feeling better and is now taking walks. Yesterday, Larry and Cate received the news that Nicole, their daughter, had been sick and in the hospital for a week. I asked Swamiji for his prayers. He said, "Papa is there," and for the parents "not to worry, it is nothing serious." It was a relief to hear this. When I got up to leave Swamiji I could hardly walk, so filled with God was I. Swamiji is truly a saint, flowing with God. We are blessed to have his darshan.

Om Sri Ram Jai Ram

Oct 21 -cont-

I met with Swamiji today with the question: "I came to India with the sole purpose of getting Universal Vision, what advice can you give? I feel the power of God within you, and also the spirit of Papa and Mataji." He nodded his head and told me that Papa had said to keep the mind on God always. The best way that Papa knew was chanting Ram Nam. Also, to see God in everything and everyone. To serve God in all we do. Every part of space is filled with God. He lifted a writing board off his lap and said, "When you move this you can do it like this, carefully," he gently sat it on a small table in front of him. "Or you can do it like this," and he carelessly flipped the writing board toward the table. "When you see it as God you do it this way," showing a smooth, gentle move. "Most people do it this way, doing it carelessly." I said, "Swamiji, that is how God shows me the world, and I feel God inside all the time. Yet, there seems to be a veil that remains between us." He then said, "You must cry for God, and ask Him for pure devotion. You must pierce that veil! Pray to God for that devotion." I then said, "Thank you Swamiji. Will you give me your blessings, and the blessings of Papa and Mataji?" He smiled, nodding his head slightly in assent, then held his hands in benediction as I bowed before him. This was the moment for which I came. In all humility and submission, I pray to God for those blessings that will give me that pure devotion of which he spoke.

Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti.

Oct. 23

Sweet Ram, Sweet Papa, Sweet Mother. What thanks could possibly convey the gratitude I feel for all the thoughtful grace poured upon me and our little group!

Swamiji asked Phyllis today for some sea water. Later he said, “just joking”. Well, no lost words. Phyllis and I headed for the Arabian Sea. Beaches lined with palms trees and fishing boats. The fishing boats look like North West Native canoes, locals lounging under shade of palms obviously not used to Westerners, and the sea-water was just right for wading. Oh perfection! in 80 degree water. Then on to a farewell of the ashram. Swamiji’s blessings on our departure lifted me in spirit, when I descended to body consciousness, I noticed those who had been bowing with me at Swamiji’s feet were gone! His blissful smile conveyed all. Being with Swamiji is the closest thing I’ve known to being with Mother in this lifetime. What blessings.

The next stage of our pilgrimage began. Swami Vishwananda, Larry, Cate, Phyllis and I boarded the overnight bus for Bangalore. Oh the send off! As we left there were twenty or more ashramites at the bus showering us with so much love. Sri Ram was telling us stories under twinkling stars. I am reminded that these are the same trees and stars that Mother had described when Papa spoke and a spiritual light radiated out from Papa as far as the eyes could see, made even more authentic in the present by the lack of electricity that occurs every evening for a half hour. Sri Ram told of Mother “pestering” Papa for God-Realization. “Egged on,” he says by Mataji. Sri Ram went to tell us of times Mataji would take Papa to task, “Why don’t you give this experience (God) to others?” Papa: “The student needs to be ready.” Mataji: “If all the students fail, it reflects badly on the teacher, not the students.” Sri Ram laughing: “Of course Papa said he did not care about the opinions of others.” At one time Papa offered to a group seated around him Realization. They only needed to ask for it. Sri Ram, then 16 years old, was there. Sitting mute, no one took Papa up on his offer. He repeated the offer three times, no one moved. Then Papa said, “Offer withdrawn!” Mataji: “Papa, you could give that experience (God-Realization) to others if you wanted.” Papa: “Ramdas gave the opportunity three times, but no one took him up.” Mataji: “Papa, you can fool others, but you cannot fool me! You outwardly made the offer, but inwardly you kept their lips sealed.” Such is the play of Papa and commentary of Mataji.

Oct. 24 Satya Sai Baba Ashram

From Bangalore we motored to Prasanthi Nilayam. This ashram is the home of the world renowned Satya Sai Baba. Located in a remote region north of Bangalore, a small city has materialized around this unique God-man. Sai Baba is famous for materializing objects out of thin air while in close proximity to amazed onlookers. I have come for darshan of this famous Baba with a question in my mind, “Is Sai Baba realized or just a showman?” Thanks to God’s grace and Swamiji Vishwananda we had VIP treatment and an escort to the immense darshan hall of Satya Sai Baba and front row seats. Swami Vishwananda spoke of the early years when he came out to the ashram to see Satya Sai Baba. At that time there was no gold overhead covering or marble floor where we now sat. Swami would help out by sweeping and doing chores as needed. There was no transportation at that time to the remote ashram, so they walked much of the way. Swami knows many of those who are now part of the ashram management. We met with the head of security and were given escort past the long lines of devotees standing in line under the hot sun. We were guided around the metal detectors. The reason for these security measures was due to an attempt on Sai Baba’s life by a gunman. Some of those in the room next to Sai Baba were shot during the attempt. We arrived in the darshan hall just in time to see the back of Sai Baba while he walked away from us, giving darshan to those seated. We were given front row seats and Swamiji Vishwananda suggested we stay and meditate. The schedule of darshan times are variable, but he was not due to come out for some hours. In dutiful submission, I happily closed my eyes in meditation. This place has a definite spiritual current flowing, it has immense sweep. When I saw Sai Baba walking it gave me the impression it was Mother walking. It was so strong, I knew it was no small association. We meditated.

For a long time we were quiet. I sat cross legged on the dark brown marble floor with my hands flat on the floor in front of me, fingers outstretched, an unusual posture for me that I felt compelled to assume. As I meditated I felt intense pressure in the back right side of my head. Sometime later someone walked nearby and I felt the floor “swim”, moving in a wave-like motion as if it were liquid. Feeling the floor “move” in this manner made me know I was not in an ordinary state of consciousness. The locus of my attention then shifted to high above all those seated in the darshan hall. Suddenly, I was made aware of the thousands of thoughts, feelings and perceptions of those gathered there for darshan. In this spiritual omniscience I was the observer of the internal consciousness of each and every person there. Somehow I was able to simultaneously know the collective consciousness of thousands of devotees gathered in the darshan hall. After sometime in this state I thought, “This is how Baba is able to give darshan to all those thousands.” I could “feel” it was Baba who was gently but powerfully guiding me in this experience, it was he who was there “next to me” in consciousness. It did not feel in any way that he was controlling or invasive. I asked Mother and Gurus to be with me, and earlier I had asked them “If it be thy will,” to have Sai Baba’s darshan, but only through Mother. When I saw Sai Baba walk and was so strongly reminded of Mother, it made me think that God and Gurus blessings were present.

For some time I was in the spiritual consciousness of being one with the whole crowd. Then the focus of my attention was drawn from the large crowd to three devotees. Even though they were in the back of the large darshan hall, I knew their thoughts and “heard” their conversation. I thought, “My mind has lost its universal nature from before,” since I shifted from having knowledge of those thousands to only these three. Then the thought came, guided by Sai Baba, “This too is part of the universal mind”. Then I realized God is equally present in the particular and in the general. Then my consciousness expanded past this world, to the cosmos, and into God’s Light. After some time I returned to being conscious again of the darshan hall. Then inwardly I “saw” Baba seated in the upstairs room above the stage area³⁰. I was with him in that room, “seeing” the furniture, etc. While in that uplifted consciousness I also knew Swami Vishwananda was anxious that we have the physical sight of Baba. So, while I was more than satisfied with the inner darshan of Baba, I requested Sai Baba to make a physical appearance for darshan. He, in my mind’s eye, got up and started down some stairs. I took this as agreement he was to make an appearance even though he was not scheduled to.

I looked out on the world through my two physical eyes, and Swami V. asked if we should go. I said, “Let’s wait 10 minutes.” 10 minutes passed by. I could tell Swami V. was praying that we get darshan. Then Swami Vishwananda suggested that we leave. I said, “It’s up to you Swamiji.” Just then there was a change in the air. A hushed expectancy and a feeling of electricity went through the large darshan hall. All devotees looked to the raised stage where perhaps a hundred young men were seated. Then Swami V. said, “I see him!” I leaned to the left and peered around a pillar and saw an orange robe and a halo of black hair. Sai Baba walked in our direction on the stage and a visible aura of energy surrounded him, especially his head. He was talking to a group of the young men on the stage for quite a while. We watched with expectancy. For what? That is unknown. Just the possibility of... something. For myself, I felt blessed by his inner darshan, and the outer was just icing on the cake, as they say. Then he walked further toward us to the edge of the stage and looked our way for some moments. Swamiji was thrilled, I could feel, as he bowed his head from a seated position. I too felt blessed. Baba then walked away from us on to another direction and then he disappeared again. I felt truly blessed today by the darshan of Satya Sai Baba, a great God-Being.

Jai Guru, Jai Guru, Jai Guru, Jai Guru.

Oct. 25 Bangalore

Yesterday, as we drove out to Sai Baba's at Puttaparthi, we passed through an area called Nandi hills. There was one hill that had a tower at the top. Swami V. said Queen Victoria had made a visit there and the tower commemorated that visit. Past that point I felt powerfully drawn inward. I sat on the floor between two jump seats in the back of the jeep. Once in a while I opened my eyes as two slits. I looked out on those hills and the thought came to me, "Yogis meditate in those hills". Then, inwardly, I mentally felt their consciousness on mine. Pure, clean, devoted minds. They were communing with my mind, letting me know of their existence. It was a beautiful experience. I looked out again, saw the rocky terrain, trees and shrubs growing, small lakes at regular intervals and thought, "What a wonderful place to meditate, living a simple life." The area seemed blessed by those saints who lived there, and it somehow felt anciently familiar. I could easily feel drawn to this place. This experience stayed with me in a powerful way until the darshan experience with Satya Sai Baba. Much later in our trip, I spoke of this experience to Swami Vishwananda and he indicated he knew of such meditating yogis in that area. He spoke of it as if it were not a commonly known thing, and he looked at me curiously when I spoke of it. He said he would take me to an area he knew where I could stay and meditate. I had the desire to do this, but Ram's command never came during my time in India.

A few other details. Swamiji V. took us to see Sri Chakravati at Prasanthi Nilayam after Satya Sai Baba's darshan. He was all love and kindness. He was the one who had arranged for our VIP treatment getting into darshan. Chakravati is a distinguished looking man, beautiful features, and listened attentively as Swami V. talked about coming in the early days, sleeping on the bare ground in the same spot where we had sat on marble floors, and serving Baba by sweeping and doing janitorial work there etc. Larry asked Sri Chakravati about recommended books by Sai Baba. He gave us each a book. Larry and I both got books of recorded talks of Sai Baba's and Swamiji got Baba's latest book on love.

Jai Guru, Jai Ram.

Oct. 26

By Ram's sweet Grace we arrived at Ramanashram. O what peace upon entering the grounds! We met a wonderful saint, Ramana, grand nephew of Ramana Maharshi and president of the ashram. He explained he is not the spiritual head, though I definitely felt while perhaps not in title, he is in reality the current spiritual head of this wonderful ashram. He presented us with some books by the great Master, Ramana Maharshi, and we toured the beautiful grounds. The buildings are harmoniously designed in classical Indian architecture. Monkeys, peacocks and other animals have the run of the grounds. Settled in wonderfully simple accommodations, we were warned not to leave anything outside as the monkeys would think of it as their own. Larry left our door open for a short time, only to find the monkeys running out of the room with cookies, off on a merry chase to safety of high limbed trees! Meals were served while we sat in seated rows, cross legged. Servers came with stainless steel buckets, spooning out servings onto banana leaves. The food was delicious, obviously made with the one indispensable ingredient, love.

By evening we were walking around the samadhi, the burial place, of Ramana Maharshi. The samadhi is contained in a larger hall. Next to it is the samadhi of Ramana Maharshi's mother. The ancient design and inscriptions on the walls of her samadhi makes one to feel they have gone back thousands of years to ancient Bharat, the original name for India. While we circled the samadhi in clockwise fashion, the priests, on a raised inner platform, performed their sacred service for the Shiva lingam. The Shiva lingam represents the power of God that has brought all into creation. The incantational tones resonated deeply in the

body and soul. Such an effect I have never felt before from chanting. The chanted Vedas are said to be designed to create a vibration that changes the cells of the body, mind and soul. As I circumambulated the samadhi, the chanting of the priest penetrated into me. Feeling my life energy withdraw from my body, I leaned in a physically weakened state on the rail of the samadhi overcome with the Divine mood. As they poured milk, water and curds over the Shiva Lingam I had to sit down against the outer wall of the hall surrounding the samadhi. The power of the chanting, the traditional ritual enacted and the ancient look of the temple all combined to cast a powerful spell that uplifted me into a high state of consciousness.

I was riveted inwardly in an impersonal state of mind. O supernal blessings! Who can describe such states? My mind, while maintaining this heightened state, was then drawn to Cate, who I inwardly knew was having difficulty. My mind easily melded with hers. Her body and mind overwhelmed by the vibration, I knew she would be better off sitting next to me. She was out of my sight, but just then she looked around the corner of the wall where she had been sitting. She looked spiritually distressed and asked, “Do I have to do this all by myself?” I patted the floor and motioned her next to me. She came beside me, her body shaking. As we sat together her body and soul calmed. Great shakti, the power of God and spiritual Masters, can temporarily overwhelm the devotee. But, the changes in the atomic structure of the body and the finer subtle astral body stand as permanent blessings for the aspirant of God. And truly, we were all blessed by our visit to this sacred site of the great Master, Ramana Maharshi.

Oct. 26 Bangalore

Back from Ramanashram with a “day off.” In Bangalore, I have some time to write, email and rest this body. Swami V. was a topic of conversation last night after his leaving. He has seen to our deluxe lodging here at Bangalore³¹, to our knowledge at no cost to us! Everywhere we go we find devotees who love and respect him. He also freely elucidates stories from the Ramayana and other Indian lore. He always speaks the truth, and has our best interest in mind. There are also times when there have been clashes of personalities and cultures. Such is the mixed nature of the world.

O Ram, Your mixed nature of creation is ever here to expose any attachments we might have and to remind us that our sole reliance can be upon You alone. You are so kind in all Your expressions, despite their appearance. It calls upon us to surrender at times, use our will at times, suffer at times and rejoice at times. None of these states affect our real and eternal Nature. As long as we identify with the externals of life, it is filled with duality. Only by letting go of our attachment to this body and the alternating currents of this world can we enjoy our real Nature. For every pleasure in this world, there is a pain, every up has its down. This is the truth of creation.

Oct. 30 Stopped on the tracks on the way to Puri

The train engine stopped dead in its tracks! This is India! We have been on the train since two nights ago.

Oct. 31 Puri

Time to write has been precious little. And we are preparing to go now, so it seems. Again, little time. Our purpose in coming to Puri is to see Sri Yukteswar’s Kerar Ashram. Parya Nath Kerar was Sri Yukteswar’s name previous to taking sannyas. I believe it was Master, and his brother Sananda, who designed the samadhi temple after Sri Yukteswar’s mahasamadhi in 1936 at this seaside hermitage. Oh, to enter those

precincts brings such peace and upliftment! Sri Yukteswar's Presence continues in this place. Articles of devotion litter the samadhi building floor, a hooded serpent of brass raises its head to peer at the marble embossed image of Sri Yukteswar. My spine and ajna were lit with a deep mystical Light. The power of God pulsed in the room like a spiritual atomic reactor. O what peace, joy! The next day, today, an early morning walk on the beautiful beach. Met Phyllis a little later while walking and went toward a crowd on the beach. We met two couples who traveled from Orisa to the famous Jagannath temple here at Puri. We talked about the Jagannath Temple and they described their pilgrimage to it. They had come to the Bay in order to bathe before going again to the temple. They asked us to join and we splashed and frolicked in the foam with wild abandonment. Oh, we played in that water! We men dove and rolled in the waves, hanging on to each other when the strong under tow pulled us out. The women sat in shallow water and bathed. Some patterns of male-female preferences seem to be universal. This event seemed to me to be Sri Yukteswar come to us as boundless joy! A side of the great Master's nature undiscovered by me up 'til then. Suddenly one of the men engaged a boy on the beach who sold little images in a box. He bargained, walked away, then called the boy back and purchased the image. He signed his name...

November 1 Rocking train to Calcutta

...and gave the images of Lord Jagannath, his sister and older brother to me. We bade goodbye to our immortal friends and back to Karar Ashram. We missed Swami Yogeshwar, the current ashram swami, but again visited those sacred precincts. Oh, blissful time. The vibration of his samadhi is tremendous. The body relaxes, consciousness raises to spiritual realms.

O Sri Yukteswar, I have traveled here for one reason. Give me the grace to desire God alone. Reveal to me the Universal Vision and make me one with you in that realization.

Such was my prayer. We planned to leave on the train this same night. For some reason our train reservations could not be made. All God's will. Back to the ashram and this time Swami Yogeshwar was back. He let us go into Sri Yukteswar's bedroom. The great Master's bed was still there and the vibrations were so thick that I felt we were swimming in a sea of spiritual power. The swami almost had permanent residents, as none of us wanted to leave! Over to the meditation hall. A picture on the wall that struck me as similar to the crucifixion of Christ was of Sri Yukteswar after mahasamadhi! Master and another devotee each had an outstretched arm on Sri Yukteswar while he was seated in lotus posture. There was also a picture of Lahiri Mahasaya as I had not seen, with beard and halo! Wonderful. We bought books and pictures. Back to the samadhi. Again sailing on spiritual skied wings.

O Ram, You arrange all schedules exactly as they should be. You provided no train so that we might receive spiritual darshan again and these pictures and books. And, gourmet food in the bargain! Ocean air, swimming in the ocean, everything. Such is the Beauty of our life when it is turned over to You.

We are now on our way to Calcutta for a 5 day stay. Part of Ram being our tour guide was the exact way he looked after every detail of the trip. Larry had made a mistake and told our hosts in Calcutta we would be there on the second of November. If we had made the train we ended up missing, we would have arrived on the first of November. Our hosts would not have known of our coming. So Ram made all arrangements perfectly so we arrived on the second, when they expected us. God takes care of all our needs! Jai Ram Jai Guru

Nov.6 Calcutta - Kali Ghat

A day off - well needed! Traveling is tiring to the physical body. The inundation of varied mental/emotional forms can be wearing on the psychic body. Yesterday we drove to Belur Math where Vivekananda built a samadhi for his beloved Master, Ramakrishna Paramhansa. What beauty in that structure. Large inside arches, solid cut stones for foundation and arching domes pointing to the heavens. We walked the marble steps and floor to the focus of this samadhi, final resting place of one of the great avatars of recent history. Genuflecting before the carved image of Ramakrishna, dressed in a gold robe, seated in his classic pose, one can feel the devotional mood of the devotees and the spiritually charged environment.

I then took a seat with other devotees in front of the shrine. Sitting eastern style on the marble floor I entered into an interior state. I felt the void between myself and this great saint. For twenty years I have thrilled at the recorded sayings in the *Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* by Master Mahasaya. Now I have come to the place of his burial. Inwardly I petitioned for his grace. I clearly heard his thoughts: "Still the mind and heart." I briefly worked on stilling them and they easily became quiet. I then "saw" the Master with my inner eye in his seated pose. Like the devotee who worked all day and then slept at the Master's feet, I lay my head on his lap. Oh, what sweet communion! I sat as a babe on its mother's lap and drank in the sweet nectar of his presence. Peace and spiritual oneness pervaded time and space. For a long time, I stayed in that pose. When I opened my eyes the doors before the outer image were closed and the other devotees were gone. Where had the time passed? There is no time in that asana³²! Timeless oneness was all that was present. My breaking heart cannot contain all the blessings bestowed on me. I feel as though my great Guru has gone before me and prepared the way with rose petalled blessings for all the sacred places I have come to see. Of myself, I know I am nothing. But she has indulged my every spiritual whim. Swami V. has said I would be drawn to India again and again. I do not know. But I do feel that this pilgrimage is a fulfillment of my dream of India.

Nov. 7

In terms of saints, I have met a few. Swami Satchidananda certainly is at the top. Satya Sai Baba was referred to by Mataji as Krishna. I could not argue with this appellation and I feel greatly blessed by his darshan. Swami Vishwananda is certainly a great sage of learning and has given freely of his knowledge. We had darshan of the President of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Society, and he had a wonderful aura about him. Sri Chakravarty of Aurobindo Ashram, whom we met in Haridwar had a pure and wonderful feeling about him, Swami Nityananda of Dwarahat and so many sincere and devout souls. Who knows what hidden wealth of spiritual jewels may lie behind the human masks we see? All, all lies behind, and manifests through the human. Sometimes the power and beauty of God shines so brilliantly it pierces the veil of separation and uplifts and purifies the heart and mind of all. The emphasis thus far has been on the rigors of travel with the fulfillment of reaching sacred places, charged by saints either from the present or the past. Divinely inspired pilgrimage changes the very body cells and purifies the soul of worldly attachments. All effort and pain in getting to a spiritually illumined destination seems insignificant once one arrives. What is played out in a pilgrimage is an identical pattern to the way of spiritual realization. It teaches us to bear all difficulties with detachment and that pleasure and pain occur as natural consequences of being in this body. When an aspirant focuses the mind on God, then pain becomes bliss and the destination of Spiritual Consciousness obliterates all difficulties encountered along the way.

Nov. 8

In addition to the living saints and God-Beings I have met so far, the pilgrimage has included the visiting of sacred sites blessed by towering spiritual personalities of the past. At Belur Math I visited Ramakrishna Paramhansa's samadhi temple. Also on the grounds are the samadhi temples of Swami Vivekananda, Sarada Devi (Ramakrishna's holy consort) and Rakal (Swami Brahmananda) that were inspiring to behold. In bowing to Swami Vivekananda's image at his samadhi it dawned on me what gratitude I felt toward him. He had bravely come to the West as a fore-runner of Paramhansa Yogananda as he spread his message of his vision for the world and the spirit of Ramakrishna. These great God-Beings came at a time that devotion and spirituality were under assault in India by Western values and rationalism. Tapping a fount of spiritual blessings from his master, Ramakrishna, Vivekananda helped turn the tide not only in India, but in the West also. Whether the influence of these great masters inspires one to follow in their footsteps, or they strengthen one in their own spiritual path, such masters release a gate that allows a flood of grace to all receptive souls. Truly, Belur Math is a great outpouring of these saint's blessings and grace. Beautifully kept grounds and grand monuments reflect the purity of spirit that resides there.

On to Dakshineswar, residence of Ramakrishna during his lifetime. Wending our way through the beggars and vendors, we found ourselves magnetically drawn to Ramakrishna's living quarters. Kept as a shrine, one can see the original bed and cot of the master. Pilgrims either walk through this shrine or stay to sit and meditate. We sat at the foot of the bed of this truly great God-man. Upon leaving the room Swami V. and I were given flowers by the priest. Persons who came after us asked for the same but the priest looked at them impassively. Ramakrishna's grace continued to shower upon me. On to the Kali³³ temple. In the crush of pilgrims, a temple priest came out of the crowd and escorted Swamiji and I around the crowd, through a side door and we were taken to the front for a view of the famous Kali figure.

O Lord, such is Your kindness and grace!

On to Yogananda's YSS Ashram near Dakshineswar. Beautiful grounds were explored and we had a picnic lunch next to Ganga. On our way back we stopped again at Master's boyhood home at 4 Gupar Road. Oh what blessings to be in the attic shrine once again where Master had the vision of the Divine Mother and place of his early sadhana! What a treasure to be in the lovely company of Hare Krishna, Yoganandaji's saintly nephew.

Nov. 11 Veranasi (previously Benares and before that Kashi)

It has been difficult keeping up on this diary, but yesterday Swami V., Larry and Cate left for other places. Swami V. to Delhi, Larry and Cate for Anandashram. Our group pilgrimage so long planned is now officially over! Time, being God's play dough, gets molded according to His design. Immediately upon entering Benares I felt a holy vibration here and knew I liked this city. Some make the claim that Benares is the oldest continuously inhabited city in the world. But I am hop-scotching ahead. First our visit to Srirampur (previously known as Serampore) near Calcutta. Cate's condition of lung congestion had grown worse during our trip, and in particular in the precincts of Calcutta due to the thick pollution of traffic. We rented an air conditioned Ambassador, that accommodated only three plus the driver very comfortably. So, Phyllis and Swamiji, both tired, stayed behind. Through narrow, crowded bumpy streets we traveled to Serampore, family home and temple of Sri Yukteswar. Arriving without address or directions, silent prayers went out to the omniscient Master for guidance. Larry leading the charge, had the typical gathering of six or eight passers-by all encircling him on the sidewalk, each with different ideas of where we should go, all talking in high speed Bengali! Finally a convincing voice directed our excellent

driver through narrower lanes, through lefts and rights, suddenly the sign for the temple was spotted as we drove by.

Workers at the temple unlocked the door and again we enjoyed the peace and joy of Sri Yukteswar's spirit. Again I was struck by the sweet peace of this God-man. The thought came to me that his promise of no more scolding words to Master, said at the time of his resurrection, may have extended to further generations of devotees, for the peace and joy are so pervasive today! We visited the home of Yogananda's uncle who exploded at Master for daring to ask for the use of his servant for his trip to the Himalayas (story from A of Y), and down to the bathing ghat where Sri Yukteswar used to walk. The ghat is guarded by small Vishnu and Shiva temples on either side and a giant Banyan stands as a silent sentinel. I asked about the location of the tree where Sri Yukteswar met Babaji, but our guide did not know, perhaps the ancient Banyan? Off to lunch and back to the temple site. Permission to enter Sri Yukteswar's ancestral home was granted by the family, a rare privilege according to Hare Krishna. We reverently followed the steps up to the balcony, so often tread by Sri Yukteswar and Master. Oh what sanctity there is in those walls and floors. Now occupied by family members, who graciously allowed us to enter his bedroom. Words fail to describe the thrill in the heart that came in realizing we stood in the same room where the Divine Drama of the Master-disciple training unfolded. Even as I think about it now, thrills come to me.

Not sorry to leave the noise and congestion of Calcutta the next day, we traveled by train to Benares, considered the most sacred city in India. The three wheeled rickshaw ride through busy streets does not disappoint. Behind all the clamor is a spiritual vibration. The thought, "I like this city," comes clearly to mind. At last we arrive at Sri Paramahansa Rama Hriday Das Ashram and school for boys. We have been provided³⁴ a very nice apartment suite situated above the boy's school, who are busy learning Vedas etc. Daily pilgrimages to Lahiri Mahasaya's home brought varying messages from neighbors. "Banamali (Lahiri Mahasaya's grandson and current owner of the house) is in Calcutta due to illness," verifying what Hare Krishna had told us in Calcutta. Banamali's son, we were told, was staying the night at his father's home. A neighbor said, "come at 6:00 a.m." We did. We found no one at home. The same neighbor later told us, "He came just after you left, come back later." We did. We made our daily pilgrimage to the great master's house all times of the day. Finally a neighbor offered, "I will call him, he will be here in ten minutes, wait." We did. Later we are told, "He does not have permission to let others come in the house. You may not enter." Final words. With an ache in my heart we left. My first disappointment, my first closed door. Why here? I have felt so close to this Master, especially for the past two years. The way to his house, the bricks lining the narrow lane are indelibly imprinted on my memory. We returned yesterday with a note explaining I mailed a letter from America and perhaps Banamali had left permission for us to enter by name. We were told by the kind neighbor to come back in one or two months! Oh cruel time.

One compensation came as I sat on the steps across from the front door where "B. Lahiry" marked the spot. While sitting on the steps, in deep meditation, I saw in a clear vision Lahiri Baba open the door and lead me into the inner courtyard. The kind Master Baba gave me his blessings in this way. Later, upon leaving, I touched my right hand to the step and then to my forehead and felt the vibration of those sacred steps. I then leaned against the wall, even as I had seen a passer-by do. The vibration in that wall, so wonderful, vibrant. Tears come at the thought.

Swami V. had said that tears are spiritual when they come from the outer part of the eye or the mid-part of the eye. In the past I had noticed that when in a spiritual mood tears came from the outer part of the eye, but had never heard that explained before.

O my longing for the Universal Vision is only intensified by this denial.
Lord, absorb this little self into Thy Great Self so I may be with You always.
Om Tat Sat

Nov. 29 Anandashram

The train ride down this time afforded us the “express” route from the north to Anandashram we had been detoured from the first time. On the train from Benares I came down with a cold. Half of one night I spent in chills, with uncontrollable shaking, and the other half in high fever that eventually broke into sweat that soaked my sheets. While the fever burned, I told God, “Don’t spare the wood, let’s burn it all!” In pain and bliss I laughed as the fire roared! When the mind is fixed on God, where is there room for fear or dislike? All experiences come from the all pervading, infinite mind. When this is clearly experienced, unsurpassing peace becomes the hallmark of the aspirant. Experience in the world is not shunned nor sought after. Now, the devotee is made to move, think and speak by the everlasting flow of Divine Consciousness. In unbroken continuity, life becomes pervaded by the Super-Conscious. All glory to the Infinite, ever blissful Self. A few days later we joined Kathy, Elaine, Larry and Cate at Anandashram. Two days later Kathy and Elaine left for home, rich with experiences. A few days after Larry and Cate left for home. I felt like a parent seeing my children off safely.

With sickness hanging over both Phyllis and me, we left for Kanniyakumari. “Why”, asked Swami Satchidanda, “Are you leaving when you are sick?” “Ram’s command” is my simple reply. On the way we learned the train tracks have been covered with mud and we will need to take a bus from Trivandrum onward. While on the train, I sat next to a man and struck up a conversation. God showed me he was an alcoholic, but he was a good man and could quit. During the course of our conversation I boldly said, “Why do you need that?” Pointing to a paper bag I knew contained a hidden bottle of alcohol. I said, “God wants you to quit!” (This kind of talk is quite alien to me, but I was being infused with an inner command). He replied that others had said that also, but he took it from me that it was God speaking to him. “Further,” I said, “God told me you are a good man.” With tears filling his eyes, he asked me to come to dinner at his house and tell his wife and children what God had told me about him. He said he would quit on December 1st. I said, “When you make up your mind and surrender to God, you will be able to quit.”

O Lord of Infinite mercy, You use your humble servant in the most marvelous ways.

At Trivandrum, John Joseph and his brother-in-law are at the train station to meet us even though it is late at night, and the train is running several hours late! We met John (an Indian who is a Christian) while on the train coming from Bombay to Anandashram. He had offered to let us use his computer and internet access from his home if we should come to Trivandrum. Phyllis had sent a fax but we had not heard back, so we did not expect to see him. John saw us to a hotel. He had invited us to his home that night to meet his wife but Phyllis was not feeling well. The next day his brother-in-law showed us all around the city and out to Kovalam Beach, famous for its beauty. Phyllis wished to stay there so we took lodgings in a small hotel on the beach. The sea air was very beneficial for our clogged lungs and sinuses. That night John, his wife and children joined us for dinner out at our invitation. We intended to treat them for dinner for all their kindness. But John turned the tables. He knew the owner of the restaurant and we were told our money was no good there. We had to yield and felt as if “the guest were God”. Such love and service. The heart is overwhelmed at such kindness. John had reserved our bus tickets for Kanniyakumari. His brother-in-law wanted to pay for the bus tickets, but we insisted that we pay. What can one do with such hospitality but give thanks to the ultimate Author of all giving?

With all obstacles overcome we arrived at Kanniyakumari. It was at this most southern point of India that Vivekananda had a vision of the history of spiritual India reveal itself through his inner vision like a motion picture film. He had the question, what destiny did he have, and how to fulfill it? The vision answered both questions. From this place he proceeded to Chicago, USA to give a speech in front of a Religious Liberals Conference. He had such little money he slept in a cattle car in the train yards the night before his speech. The speech made such a sensation that he became famous overnight. He was flooded with requests to give other talks in other parts of the country. Thus, it was at this southern most spot of India where three great bodies of water come together, the Arabian Sea, the Indian Ocean, and the huge Bay of Bengal, that Vivekananda received the inspiration to revive the karma yoga path of loving service to ones fellow man and renewed appreciation for the Vedas, ancient scriptures of Bharat, India.

We found an agreeable hotel and the next day boarded a boat that took us to the rock where Vivekananda meditated. It is kept as a museum, not a temple, with police with whistles to keep people moving. The “meditation room” had a lighted “Om”³⁵ sign that changed every minute. All were instructed not to stay longer than one rotation! Most people seemed to be there more as tourists than pilgrims, and there was no space to be quiet or meditate. It created a less than divinely charged atmosphere. We left. Disharmony broke outside the hotel were there were two long verbal fights during the day, the Vivekananda Kende had no discernable spiritual feeling, and we were both exhausted from travel and sickness. At this low point Phyllis said she had suspected the trip would not be good by the “signs” of difficulty in getting here. For instance, the mud slide on the road, etc.. She related it to the disappointing trip to Brindaban. She concluded it had been a mistake to come. I told her I did not make decisions of “to go” or “not to go” by such outer signs. Much more, I did not judge the success of a pilgrimage by the apparent outcome of it feeling “good” or even “spiritual”. The fact was, this visit fulfilled the inner command I had to visit all the four corners of India. I felt satisfied and complete in that. I was glad to arrive in Kanniyakumari; I was glad to go. But such outer signs are for the lower mind. When one is attuned to God, “success and failure” cannot be judged by the ever changing world.

As I now write about this, I am thinking of Jesus’s life. By all worldly standards he died a total failure. By spiritual standards, his life was an unparalleled success. No one can gainsay the spiritual success of any endeavor except to say it fulfilled God’s inner command. Transcending all mental and worldly standards, a spiritual act stands the test of time and goes beyond worldly judgement. The fulfillment of the pilgrimage now done, Phyllis and I went separate ways. She to Bangalore, and I, back to Anandashram.

Before we departed, I asked her if the pilgrimage had been fulfilling for her. She said that in coming to India she had as her only goal to help and protect me during the pilgrimage. In addition to that, she said she also learned many things about herself. I said I thought she had fulfilled her first goal perfectly. My deep gratitude goes out to her for all she did to make this trip possible for me. She has served Mother in this form to perfection. Phyllis has sought to serve Mother in all she does. I have been the fortunate recipient of her loving service, and I feel it has been a great privilege to travel with her, not only in India, but in life together as Guru bhai and Guru bhien sadhakas.

Now I am back at Anandashram. I arrived yesterday and am making the transition from traveler to becoming more outwardly still, centered in God through inner sadhana. I continue to have some cough and congestion, but most of it has worked its way through. It has been very purifying. I am have been eating only dairy, rice and fruit. Curds or milk with rice I get at the ashram canteen, and the fruit I buy in the town of Kannangad. The mind and body are a bit restless, transitioning from the ceaseless demands of travel to

ashram life. I have felt helpless in knowing how to proceed with my sadhana. I am totally surrendered to God in this, as in all matters. Being in the presence of Swamiji always acts to uplift my spirit. Tonight I came across him on his walk while I was on mine. He singled me out of the crowd, as I followed him behind the others, and told me all about the ashram, the history of building homes for the poor etc. He gave me this special attention at a time I was struggling to calm the energy in my body. I became calm as we walked and talked. Later I sat under the bright moonlight when the lights went off and it calmed my passions, this restless energy. In this way I settled the dynamic energy of travel and made a transition to ashram calm.

O infinite Lord, guide me perfectly to Your Divine Feet. Purify me, sanctify this body, mind and soul in Thy radiant Light and make me see Thy Universal Vision now and always. Aum, Tat, Sat.

Nov 30. Anandashram

God, in this form, assumed an attitude of ignorance upon arriving at the ashram. It felt itself to be separate from the Self, and desire nature rose up. Oh, the infinite play of Spirit! With all intensity I sought to arise from that ignorance. Last night the grace of Swamiji helped. I meditated at his feet from 8:00 to 9:00 P.M. I was told later no one meditates with him during those hours. Somehow I was allowed. This morning the Gita said:

*Arjuna, whatsoever being, animate or inanimate, is born, know it as emanated from the union of Ksetra (Matter) and the Ksetrajna (Spirit).
He alone sees, who see the supreme Lord as imperishable and abiding in all perishable beings, both animate and inanimate.*

For, he who kills not himself by himself by seeing the supreme Lord, equally present in all, as one, thereby reaches the supreme state.

And he alone sees, who sees all actions being performed in every way by Prakriti alone, and the Self as the non-doer.

With this reading I came to see I had seen myself as the doer. This moment in sadhana created the impression I “needed” to make something happen to realize God. Only the vision of the supreme Lord kills the ego, even as a light turned on eliminates the darkness. I was to become the child, wholly dependent on Infinite Grace. Desire alone remained. I went to Mataji’s Samadhi and prayed:

O Universal Divine Mother,
Absorb me in Your vast Being.
Make me whole, without a second.
Create in me desire for You alone.
May I see all women as the Divine Mother.

Duality has made me separate from You,
Made me to seek You in others;
But You are ever residing within me.
Awaken me to this Truth in body, mind and soul.
At Your feet I ask for Your Infinite Grace.

Inner scene after scene of previous temptation went before my mind's eye. With each temptation the Divine Mother changed it so as to reveal her pure, spiritual Self residing in each form. Sincere regret came into my heart for each trespass.

O Mother, make my sadhana pure, and for those who look to me to be the example, may I lead them correctly and not into error.

I then read in the "Great Swan" a paraphrase of Ramakrishna's:

"The main obstacle to yoga, or conscious union with Satchidananda, are conventional thoughts on the instinctive level, such as "I am male" or "I am female." From these assumptions arise abstract notions, such as "I need a sexual and emotional partner to fulfill me." The confining structures of wealth, power and hierarchy then begin to multiply uncontrollably. True yoga becomes possible only when the mind and heart are purified — blissfully emptied of all these habitual assumptions and fantasies."

I then wrote:

O Preserver of the Light, you are removing the veils of ignorance that cover this soul like the removal of layered sheaths covering a brilliantly shining sword. You are setting me free in Your Spirit. I have assessed my desires and there is no desire other than for You. Tempt me as You might, cover me with ignorance, and Your Light will always emerge from every encasement.

Aum Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram

December 1

Swami Notes: Today a family was speaking of their father's death. Swami Satchidananda: "Did he suffer?" Devotees: "He did not suffer. He was in good health until the last day. He had loose bowels, we took him to the hospital, where he died. Even though he did not recognize us, he was chanting Ram Nam 'til the last. His lips continued to move, always chanting. (How wonderful that he remembered God, even when he did not remember his own children. This could only be the result of a life-long pattern of remembrance.) Swamiji: "It was good he came to the ashram just before his passing. It was like he knew it was coming, the way he said goodbye to everyone." (Such a lovely attitude toward the transition of a soul from the earthly body to the heavenly one.)

Last night a Satya Sai Baba devotee was telling of a difficult bus ride to Bangalore. She wrote Swamiji that it was like going from heaven, the ashram, to hell, the bus ride. He wrote back, "One and a half pages!" She said in an agitated voice, about seeing all her experiences with equal vision. I interjected, "Oh, he was taking your vision higher." She shot back angrily, "I don't care!"

O Lord, You show me in so many forms how the ego gets in the way of complete surrender. Please bless me that I may put aside all anger, dislikes, dislikes and surrender myself to You. You manifest such attitudes through others that I may clearly see the obstacles in myself. Thank You for Your loving kindness.

Yesterday: A father with a rebellious, angry, seventeen year old son sitting next to him said, “Swamiji, say how a boy should be in the family and as a student.” Swamiji, “A child’s first concern should be his studies, to do his best. He should respect his parents, and do as they ask.” Father, “And when he gets angry.” Swamiji, “He should spend time praying to God, then he won’t get angry. Lack of respect for parents is common these days, and that happens to the teachers also. If there is no respect for the parents or teachers, then the child will have a difficult time. If you cannot respect others, life will be difficult. And the parents should be devoted to God. If the child is to be spiritual, the parents must be devoted to God.” The Father nodded his head and the son listened intently. Swamiji had taken special interest in that boy the day before. It was the same day the boy had arrived and he had come to see Swamiji by himself. Later I heard the boy saying to the receptionist he wanted to ask Swamiji questions so he could argue with him. The receptionist had said she wanted to be there for the boy’s interview. Over the next week I saw what a wonderful influence Swamiji and the ashram has had on this boy as he came to have great love and respect for Swamiji.

Dec. 1 -cont-

Since coming to the ashram, temptation has been searching me out. I went to Mother Krishnabai’s samadhi and prayed to her to absorb and reunite me in the Divine Mother, so that I would have no thought of anyone else. She graced me with this movement upward in consciousness. On various levels I have gone through this temptation. Each are familiar to me. The first temptation is the desire to have some union with someone with whom there is a sexual attraction. Once that is overcome, a second, more subtle, desire arises to be wanted and adored by another. Of course each level corresponds with subtle or not so subtle energy within oneself as well as with another. If these temptations are transcended then a third level comes in the form of thoughts of a deeper nature, for instance, thoughts of past life connections and psychic attunement. The final temptation comes regarding insights concerning that one, that appear highly “spiritual” in nature. Each of these are delusive not because they are necessarily untrue, but, because they take one from the ultimate goal of complete Realization. If these temptations are worked through, then the back of that energy is broken; the beast dies. One must be wary of these desires, who, like a villain of the movies, resurrect themselves after seemingly being dead and come back to life once again.

A clear, uncompromising resolve must be had. The impersonal sword of wisdom must cut clear all sense of attachment. Jesus said that to even think of your neighbor’s wife with lust is having committed adultery. This reflects the law of mind that states thought, the causal plane of consciousness, is the beginning of creation. Whatever we habitually think on, that we will create. An important note for all aspirants: anytime that sadhana (our search for Truth) is about to deepen, temptation, prior habits, and obsessions will rise to knock one off the path. Only the most steadfast attitude will prevail during these times. Long experience on this path has revealed to me these hard won lessons. Desire nature does not die easily.

The question comes, “how long does this struggle last?” The answer is that it lasts exactly as long as it takes to purify the consciousness of all desire nature and attachment, both of the conscious and subconscious minds. One must cut off the life giving energy of the mind’s attention by giving all, surrendering all, dedicating all at the feet of the Lord. By this means only will victory come about. Perhaps centuries, lifetimes of self-created attachment will be worked through. Individuals may show up in our life that give us the opportunity to work out past karmic attachments, or they may simply resonate with the vibration within that is ready to be worked out. It is only through the Grace of pre-existent Perfected Consciousness within that desire nature is transcended. A firm and clear will is needed, then Grace will complete the work. It may seem an overwhelming task, but one thing is there to save us: the Perfect Consciousness that resides within us all. It is brought into our conscious lives by deep and persistent prayer. It is not that this

Consciousness withholds Itself from us. It simply will not enter where it is not bidden. Many lifetimes of focus on this world and the desire nature of the body have left this Supreme Consciousness within dormant. One must pray ardently to invoke that type of superior will. Then, and then alone, will the resplendent nature of Spirit shine forth from every particle of Being of the sincere aspirant.

Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram

Dec. 2

Last night I sat on the roof, invited by Babu. There also was Radha Krishna, introduced by Babu as a great sadhaka. We talked of blending the best of the cultures of East and West. I said that Christianity in the West teaches its followers to have faith in God, a great attribute, no doubt. What is not taught is the goal of conscious oneness with God. "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you," taught Jesus, and "behold the kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Besides the location and immediacy of these statements, Western Christianity has also forgotten many of the means of realizing this great state of Being as was taught by Jesus and many of his disciples. So, the ultimate goal and the means for realizing this great goal are absent. What I did not say is that the Protestants have also eliminated the idea of saints or realized individuals. The company of such Beings are invaluable aids for realizing the final goal. The popularization of Eastern ideas that embody these truths in the West may have the boomerang effect of reinforcing India's own heritage to Herself. To many young Indians who look to the West for their pattern may find support for their own Eastern tradition. When pop idols, such as Madonna, are currently touting the *Autobiography Of A Yogi* as **the** book to read, youth in India may be influenced to read it. Such is the universality of God and His play. Radha Krishna then sang a song of Krishna holding a hilltop high above frightened cows and cow-herd boys during a violent storm to protect them. What a beautiful voice he sang the Malayalam words of his Beloved, under our very own bright moonlit night. One of many occasions where the moment seemed filled with the potential of all encompassing Spirit.

This morning something funny. The mandir starts each day with chanting at 5:30 A.M. At 6:10 or 6:15 a man comes with a pot of tea and coffee. Most chanters leave the mandir to have their tea and then return to finish their chanting. 6:10, the lead singer, as tradition would have it, handed off the tambourine and another leads the chant. But what?! No man, no tea! Slowly circling the outside windows of the mandir the sadhakas look for their missing tea. The singing becomes quieter in expectation of the missing ingredient. Oh, but if we longed for God with such yearning as this cup of tea! Searching eyes stop at the windows and doors to reconnoiter for the tardy supplier. Finally, many minutes late he is spotted. A mass exodus ensues as their cherished beverage is gratefully consumed.

O Infinite Beloved, charming is Your play, designed to bring a smile to the lips. May You create in us desire and yearning for You greater than for Your earthly comforts and distractions. Give us the same desire for You as a thief would have for gold and riches kept in an unlocked room next to his own! Make us have such desire, such greed, for Your Presence alone. May it abide with us always.

Dec 3 13 ½ hours from Seattle 2:23P.M.

The ashram becomes more quiet after lunch. The custom for many Indians is a rest after lunch, a very nice habit. 1 hour rest, then at 3:00 is one half hour chanting before a one hour reading, mostly of Papa's works in English. Currently the reading consists of the *Gita Sandesh*, *God Speaks*, and *The Gospel of Swami*

Ramdas. This last week, since my return, the readings have been from *The Gospel of Swami Ramdas* at the point when Mother and Father Hamilton were having conversations with Papa. How carefully God has arranged for these readings to happen just at my return. Today, before rest, Mother's presence was so close, as if she were in the room. The thought came, "The Legend Room (at the Bon Marche in Seattle, a place Mother used to love to go for lunch) is now a legend within my own field of consciousness."

The temperature is quite warm, over 90 degrees, and humidity is over 80%. This morning Ram, who is nearly 80 and I hiked up the hill behind the ashram starting about 5:30 AM. The nearly full moon was setting and the sun rising on the opposite horizon was quite beautiful. I went to town for some fruit and nuts today and there was a march of the communist party, the ruling party in Kerala, with many hundreds of marchers. I have had conversations with many people about Kerala, that is materially poor but highly educated. Sentiments expressed are: "People in Kerala are lazy," and, "they are educated but don't know what to do with it." The unions are very strong here, demanding higher wages than even in the big cities. One businessman on the train told me that one day before he opened a business in Kerala, there were protesters out in front of his store decrying the poor wages. He said he hadn't even determined the wages yet! Everyone talks around it but no one says that the communists have the wrong answer. There was one businessman at the ashram that said, "Yes, it failed in Russia, but they still think it will work here." I believe the communist party preys on people's fears here as they have everywhere else: "Business is the enemy, government will distribute everything equally" is their line. Meanwhile everyone gets poorer and poorer. Class envy is their stock and trade.

It is a fundamental ignorance that ignores the fact that business and successful people create new wealth. Microsoft's chairman Bill Gates did not steal his money. Yes, he is said to be worth 18 billion dollars. And, he has created the opportunity for over 3,000 employees to become millionaires, as well as new wealth for stockholders and the community. How? By providing a product people want to buy. This is no crime, it is a win/win scenario. This is a fundamental lesson not yet learned by much of the world, including many American people. Much is made of the disparity between the rich and poor. This is meaningless and is meant only to breed class envy. Are those in lower income brackets better off than they have been before, compared to their own previous standards? That is the real question. Can they buy or rent a home? Do they have enough food, clothes? When the question is asked, "Are the poorest keeping up with the wealthiest of the country during growth times," the answer will consistently come back in the negative.

Anytime there is growth in the economy, the wealthiest will always be in a position to grow faster. This naturally creates more jobs and opportunities for all else. There will **never** be equality amongst all people financially. Nor should there be. Excellence should be rewarded. A far more interesting question is in asking, "Are there laws prohibiting equal opportunity?" Given equal opportunity to compete, the best will excel over time and equality will come in the form of the chance to excel in your chosen field, or to fail. Those who have less money will have to do more and work harder to get into a field. But history proves that over time this striving produces the best people. It is in the struggle that the muscles of body, mind, emotion and spirit are strengthened. Too often the easy path produces weaklings. Spiritual giants have overcome all obstacles, all personal weaknesses, all social conventions in order to attain their lofty heights. This produces humility and strength of will. To the victor in us all, may we strive to overcome darkness and negativity, and stand in the beauty of our own Light.

Om Sri Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram

Dec. 3 -cont - 9:00 P.M.

At 8:00 P.M. I approached the front door of the building where Swami Satchitananda (S.S.) resides, this time with two Australian devotees of Satya Sai Baba's. They ask to enter and are told, "No, Swamiji is doing correspondence." I sat on the concrete half wall that surrounds the porch, and listen to conversation there with devotees about lemon grass, cashews, etc. This confirms to me that the time I have been coming for darshan - 8:00-8:50 P.M. is restricted to all others. After some time one of S.S.'s intimates comes to the porch and says "You can go in now, and stay quiet." I said, "No words are necessary!" He laughed. The two ladies start to follow me in. He says "No, only him." I do not even look back, I am drawn like a moth to a light. Swamiji has poured himself out to me. Earlier that day as we sat in that morning satsang³⁶, Swamiji was talking to a large group who were leaving the ashram. Swamiji had in his hand *Temple Culture*, and said "Do you have it?" I was sitting behind the woman he had been talking to and she said "no." I had the sense Swamiji had actually been asking me. He then said, "David, do you have this book?" I said "No, Swamiji." and he handed it to someone who gave it to the "mother". He said, "Get some more, give one to David." So much grace. Others have commented they have noticed his preference for me. They say, "Well, of course Swamiji would let **you** do that." What to do? I have come but for one reason. To realize God. Every focus of his attention I take as a blessing directly from God, and due to Mother. In fact, all that I have, all that I am is due to Mother. She has paved the way by paying the price for all that has been given me. My one prayer, my Longing of the heart:

O Lord, purify this body, mind and soul to serve You perfectly.

The Lord is my all in all. I have searched my desire nature, I find nothing but desire for God. Just a thread hangs me to this body consciousness. One stroke of God's Grace will set me free. What to do? Pray, chant, meditate. Surrender all I am to God. Hang on to the word of S.S., "You will get everything." Which for me means God. Am I special to be treated this way? No, only by receiving undeserved Grace can this happen. Am I happy to have it? Yes, not at any other's expense, but to achieve God's will. I know that if it were in keeping with their higher good, they would be entering with me. Am I better than they? Absolutely not. They are sincere devotees, striving on the path. I stood by my Guru, through thick and thin, that is all I can say, and that was by God and Guru's Grace. And Mother has absolutely stuck by me in thick and thin. I wish I could say I have been the perfect devotee. God knows I have not. But, one thing I can say, I have a sincere desire to know God in the Universal Vision, and I have patience and persistence. Will Swamiji, Papa, Mother, Master, God deem me worthy of the ultimate Goal? Time will tell. But one thing. I will never give up, never give in, never, never, never! I will seek to love and serve God in whatever way I can until He sees fit to totally transform this lump of clay into His image and likeness, only by His Grace, His love. Divine Mother accepts all her children, and cannot turn away from one who looks only to Her for Her one look:

Look to this form O Mother. Turn Your gaze on me and bring this child into Your Light.
You have smiled at me through Swamiji, graced me in His Presence. Peer into my heart,
see its love for You. You alone can do the work. There is nothing else for me. Om Sri
Ram Jai Ram Jai Jai Ram

Dec 4 3:00A.M.

Awake and Ready! A peek out of doors reveals the brightness of full moon at its zenith. Ah, to meditate, go up the mountain?! I think to myself, "It's early, maybe I'll go up the mountain at 4:00." Lying back down on my bed Papa comes to mind. "What would Papa do? He would leave for the mountain, Ram's

command! Maybe I'll be tired, maybe cold. Where do these fears come in? I am called upon to be fearless, dispassionate to the body!" Up and dressed I head out. I stop by Papa's samadhi to give gratitude for his influence on my Life. The lights are on in the mandir when I stop by to pranam to Papa. What is this?! Jianth is sweeping the floors. "Hari Om! Jianth." He replies, "You are up early," this from a man who is daily up at this time. "I am up the mountain." Jianth: "Do you have Swamiji's permission?" I had not even considered seeking Swamiji's permission. "No." Jianth: "There are poisonous snakes up there, maybe you shouldn't go!" "Yesterday I went up there looking for the darshan of a cobra, I did not get one." Jianth only shakes his head, smiles and asks if I have a torch (flashlight). "No, the moon will be my torch." He looks dubious as I continue my way. I jump over the locked fence and up the trail to the mountain.

Every rock is lit by the full moon light. Going the wrong path I come to a house, and retrace my steps to the wall. Up I go with Ram Nam, my cotton bed cover and a shawl Swami Vishwananda gave me for meditation. Some brisk climbing takes me to a ridge. I look back over the valley and the moon lights everything in light/shadow spellbinding wonder. Full moon, sacred to both Krishna and Buddha. Krishna for dancing under the full moon with the gopis³⁷, each one ecstatic with her multiple divine lover. And Buddha, born on a full moon, enlightened on a full moon, and left his body in Mahanirvana on a full moon. A thrice blessed day. A cooling breeze blows all around me, bringing relief from the steep ascent. Onward and upward! Quick steps, unerringly led by Ram brought me to the top. The sight is charming, all the valley lit with the glory of the full moon. I settle on a comfortable place on the rocks for half lotus asana. Mute praise rises to Him who has created all; nay, Who has become all, yet remains transcendent of it all, springs from my heart. Lonely dogs join the praise by their long howls. Again, I have no privileged darshan of a cobra. An image of a mountain lion comes to mind. Oh, to have that darshan! The image turns violent in my mind, the lion mauling me!

O Sweet Infinite Mercy, if You will it (the mauling) so, then let it be. There is no room for fear when all is done at the behest of the Divine Mother for the unqualified good of her attendant son. When will I realize You O Lord? My only fear is the fear of not having Your Universal Vision.

In my mind's eye I focus on the feet of Swamiji, as I do when meditating in his room. I am lost in His ecstasy. The drums of chanters comes wafting up the mountain side. I try to think of a version of Sri Ram that plays on a tape during meals at the Ashram canteen. It does not come. Oh, how does that go? Suddenly, over a loud speaker system somewhere in the valley below plays that exact recording.

O Lord, in Your Infinite Grace You look after my every whim. With humble gratitude,
your servant.

Hours later I lay down for a bit and doze. Awake, back again! The moon shines bright ahead of me and orange streaks the opposing sky. The inner alarm clock has awakened me on time. I re-position myself on the hill to see both the rising sun and setting moon. The sun rises over mist filled valleys and high hills, with broad mountains on the furthest horizon. A view to the other side shows the moon disappearing into the mist, just above the horizon over the Arabian Sea.

Oh what precious sights come as part of Your manifest splendor. Hari Om, Hari Om,
Shanti, Shanti, Shanti

Dec. 4 -cont-

Back to the ashram after a climb down. Sri Ram saw me and said, “So you climbed the hill at three o’clock this morning.” I said “There are no secrets at the ashram.” Laughing, he said “Did you have a torch?” “The moon was my torch.” Sri Ram: “Yes, Papa and Mataji used to climb the hill starting at exactly the same time, 3 o’clock A.M. Papa would climb it in thirty seconds.” “Well, it took me a little bit longer than that.” What wonderful confirmation regarding Papa’s inner direction to start at 3:00 A.M. and feeling of his presence from the moment of waking up, through the entire climb and my meditation time there.³⁸

Victory to Ram, Victory to Papa!

END OF PART 1

DEVOTEES AND SAINTS MET IN INDIA

- 98-9-27 Neelu: guides us to Keshashram with Bill
98-9-27 Anand(a): our YSS host/guide at Haridwar
98-9-27 Raj Kumar: our delightful friend and helper. Haridwar
98-9-27 Sri Vijender Kumar Tyagi: security guard who met Babaji. Haridwar
98-9-27 Ashish: young yogi who started school for lepers' children. Haridwar
98-9-28 Dr. Bhagat: our host for YSS satsang and loaned us car and driver. Haridwar
98-9-28 Sri Chakravaty Vijay: sweet singing saint of Aurobindo Ashram. Haridwar
98-9-28 Swami Puruananda Giri: Kriya yogi. Disciple of Swami Sadananda and Yogananda. Rishikesh.
98-9-29 Deshera: a Durga holiday. Rishikesh
98-9-30 a Kriya swami, disciple through YSS. Rishikesh
98-9-30 97(?) Swami and accomplished yogi. Rishikesh
98-10-2 Swami Nityananda: YSS Swami of Dwarahat Ashram. Dwarahat
98-10-2 T.K. Aurora: from Punjab. Had spiritual vision of Swami Nityananda. Dwarahat
98-10-8 Jitendra Chadda: Sikh friend who saved us at Agra.
98-10-9 Sanjeev Mathur: related story of sadhu and the bus. Agra
98-10-11 Shirdi Sai Baba: darshan of samadhi temple. Shirdi
98-10-11 Pande: the existing/non-existing friend directing us to Shirdi
98-10-12 Meher Baba: darshan of samadhi temple. Meherabad
98-10-14 Swami Satchidananda: Ashram Swami of Anandashram. Kanhangad
98-10-19 Swami Vishwananda: our guide in our pilgrimage. Anandashram
98-10-24 Satya Sai Baba: darshan for thousands. Puttaparthi
98-10-24 Chakravarty: Sai Baba devotee who arranged our VIP treatment. Puttaparthi
98-10-26 Ramana Maharshi Samadhi. Ramanashram
98-10-26 Sri Ramana : President Ramanashram
98-10-27 Yogi Ramsurat Kumar: Ashram near Ramanashram
98-10-31 Swami Yogeshwar: Karar Ashram Swami
98-10-31 Sri Yuktswar samadhi: Karar Ashram. Puri
98-11-6 Ramakrishna Paramhansa Samadhi: room at Dakshineswar. Belur Math
98-11-6 President: Vivikananda Ramakrishna Society. Belur Math
98-11-6 Hare Krishna: nephew of P. Yogananda. wonderful soul. Calcutta
98-11-9 Sri Yuktswar temple and original ashram. Serampore

ENDNOTES

- ¹Spiritual (discipline or practice) practice for the means of realizing God.
- ²Means “Abode of Bliss,” an ashram in the south of India founded by Swami Ramdas.
- ³Meeting a holy person. Vision.
- ⁴Phyllis Victory, a co-disciple of mine with Mother Hamilton. She has served as a center leader and we travel together on this spiritual pilgrimage as spiritual brother and sister.
- ⁵God’s name; one of the ten avatars; form of address among sadhus.
- ⁶Pious or holy person. Monk, one who has renounced worldly ties.
- ⁷Place of the remains of a saint.
- ⁸A saints or realized beings conscious exit of the body at the moment of death.
- ⁹Organization in India founded by Paramhansa Yogananda.
- ¹⁰Festival, once in 12 years to celebrate Devas’s drinking nectar.
- ¹¹Compact car made in India.
- ¹²Vision and blessings of a saint or God.
- ¹³Name of God.
- ¹⁴Salutations; prostration.
- ¹⁵Cloth men wear around the lower limbs.
- ¹⁶A meeting of devotees. Literally: Association with the wise.
- ¹⁷A woman saint famous worldwide and written about in the *Autobiography Of A Yogi*.
- ¹⁸I do not know how to spell this name. This is a phonetic spelling.
- ¹⁹Worshipper of Lord Vishnu.
- ²⁰Avatar of Vishnu, the ideal of Vaishnavas; expounder of The Song Celestial.
- ²¹Peace
- ²²Play of the Divine.
- ²³Waving of lights before deities or saints and sannyasins.
- ²⁴Literally, wheel, power centers of the astral body located along the spine and in the head.
- ²⁵Power at the base of the spine in the form of a coiled serpent.
- ²⁶Those devoted to God, devotees.
- ²⁷A devoted practitioner of spiritual discipline, a serious spiritual seeker.
- ²⁸It was an impression, not sensory perception, so it left a question in my mind whether Babaji is actually tall in stature in the dream.
- ²⁹The creative power of God that manifests as all creation.
- ³⁰I learned later this is the location of the private rooms of Satya Sai Baba.
- ³¹I want to acknowledge Ramdas and Krishnabai Haldipur for providing these lodgings free of charge to us.
- ³²A seat or mat, placed flat on the floor, especially doing meditation; also, a posture or position in hatha yoga.
- ³³The dark Goddess, one of manifestations of the Divine Mother, also known as Parvati, Durga, or Shakti.
- ³⁴By K. K. Goenka
- ³⁵The Sanskrit form
- ³⁶Fellowship amongst devotees of God or with a saint; a gathering of devotees or meeting with a saint.
- ³⁷Play-mates of Krishna.

³⁸The selection of the spot for the construction of Anandashram has indeed a deep significance. Without knowing the antecedents of the place, Ramdas was prompted to choose it intuitively. He later discovered that the place, which is known as Manjapati, was at one time covered with a thick forest and that sadhus and sannyasis were doing tapasaya in it. It was also said that the hill is sacred because in olden days there was on it a temple and a tank, faint traces of which are still to be seen. Tradition has it too, that Hanuman, (Hindu deity), when he was returning to Lanka, carrying the hill of Dronachala, dropped a portion of it at this spot, and that portion forms the present hill. *In The Vision Of God*, Vol.II has a reference to Manjapati Hill. P. 223.